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The Archeology of the Sacraments

The boundary between history and archeology is somewhat indefinite, but for the purpose of this short discussion the following distinction may be of value. History is a more or less orderly narration of events, either in the form of a chronicle which notes down occurrences from day to day or week to week, like a diary, or in a logical arrangement, presenting events in units as the historian understands the incidents which he presents. Archeology, on the other hand, and, in this instance, Christian archeology, is the science of Christian antiquity, an orderly presentation not so much of historical events as of information pertaining to cities, houses, furniture, appointments, customs, and other interesting data, many of which have historical significance without being an integral part of history. The sources of archeology are found chiefly on monuments, in inscriptions on stones, papyri, sherds, walls of houses, jewelry, articles of clothing, and other objects. Archeology, for the most part, does not depend upon connected accounts, but upon diversified sources, whose reading and interpretation frequently require special scientific training. The present discussion is based upon material offered in recognized books on Christian archeology, and the purpose is not merely to offer interesting data on extraneous topics connected with the Sacraments but to indicate also the doctrinal considerations and implications which are associated with the points as presented in the primary and secondary sources.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

It is significant that the onomatology of Holy Baptism is treated at such great length in the various books on archeology, chiefly because of certain doctrinal implications. In the Bible we have both βάπτισμα and the corresponding masculine noun, about twenty-three times in the New Testament alone. The apostle also uses the noun λουτρόν as a designation of the *sacramentum initiationis*,

but more in a descriptive way than as a designation, Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5. In the Church Fathers we find a long list of names for Holy Baptism. Stromberg (*Theorie und Praxis der Taufe*) devotes an entire chapter to the discussion of "Der Taufterminus σφραγίς," chiefly on the basis of Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30, and the many passages in the Apostolic and in the Church Fathers.¹⁾ Other designations for the Sacrament are τὸ ὕδωρ or the Latin *aqua*; ἡ πηγὴ, the Latin *fons*; χρίσμα, the Latin *unctio*; φωτισμός, the Latin *illuminatio*; μυστήριον, the Latin *arcanum* or *sacramentum*; τελείωσις, the Latin *perfectio*; μύησις, the Latin *initiatio*; μυσταγωγία, σύμβολον, and at least a dozen additional designations.²⁾ Many of these names are treated at length in various histories of dogma, since they give the doctrinal understanding held by the various teachers of the Church who chose these terms. This subject is so comprehensive that it would really require a complete article in itself.

As to the place where the Sacrament was administered, the sources of information are again numerous and the accounts very comprehensive. As in the days of the apostles, the Sacrament was administered in practically any convenient place, in private homes, in the place where the public meeting of the congregation was held, later, especially in times of persecution, in the chapels of the catacombs of Rome and elsewhere. In the *Clementine Homilies* reference is made to rivers, fountains, and the sea, and in the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr the words occur: ἔπειτα ἄγονται (namely, the candidates for Holy Baptism) ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἐνθα ὕδωρ ἐστὶ, which certainly does not confine the rite to separate places of any particular dignity or holiness. A wide latitude in places is indicated also in the well-known passage from the *Didache*, chapter VII. And Tertullian remarks: "Ideoque nulla distinctio est, mari quis, an stagno, flumine, an fonte, lacu, an alveo diluatur." (*De Baptismo*, c. 4.) The monumental evidence in this connection is likewise conclusive.

After the recognition of Christianity by the state, of course, Baptism, like other church rites, was celebrated with greater pomp and ceremony. It was not long before separate baptisteries were erected, in which conveniences were provided for the observance of a more careful prescribed ritual. Though apparently at first known as *exedrae*, as in Tyre and Antioch, these separate buildings, modeled after the large baths of that period, were soon known as βαπτιστήρια, *loca baptismi sive lavacri*, also *ecclesiae baptismales*,

1) Cf. Daniel, *Codex liturgicus*, IV:506 f.; Hoeffling, *Das Sakrament der Taufe*, I:469.

2) Cf. Augusti, *Handbuch d. christl. Archaeologie*, II:314 ff.; Bingham, *Antiquities*, III:399 ff.

although other names are found, such as φωτιστήριον, *illuminatorium*, *aula baptismatis*; κολυμβήθρα, *fons*, *piscina*. These facts emphasize the importance that was attached to the Sacrament, just as the fact that there was usually *one* baptistery in a diocese points to the peculiarity of the early Church that the bishop usually administered Baptism.³⁾

A somewhat strange phenomenon associated with the archeological history of Holy Baptism is that of special *baptismal times* or seasons in the church year. We must remember at once that this selection of seasons for the administration of the Sacrament is connected with the special circumstances which prevailed in the early Church, particularly that of the preponderance of adult baptism for a century or more. Justin Martyr indeed seems to indicate that all seasons of the year may be used for the sacred act. But as early as the days of Tertullian Easter and Pentecost are named as the most fitting seasons for the administration of the *sacramentum initiationis*. (*De Baptismo*, c. 19.) Somewhat later Leo the Great adds the Epiphany season in connection with the celebration of the Lord's baptism. It was not long before synodical decrees officially designated these seasons as those set apart for the administration of the baptismal rite, and it soon became the rule to celebrate with a great deal of pomp, especially in Asia Minor (Cappadocia), as the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa show. In a few sections of the Church, indeed, Baptism was administered also on the festival days of apostles and martyrs and on anniversary days of the dedication of churches.⁴⁾ Reference may here, incidentally, be made to the strange custom followed in some parts of the Church, namely, that of postponing baptism until death was imminent. Of this custom Bingham says: "Another sort of men put off their baptism to the end of their lives, upon a sort of Novatian principle, because they pretended to be afraid of falling into sin after baptism, and there was no second baptism allowed to regenerate men again to the kingdom of heaven; whereas, if they were baptized at the hour of death, heaven would be immediately open to them, and they might go pure and undefiled into it." (P. 508.) It is evident, therefore, that also with respect to the time of Holy Baptism liturgical rites and church customs reflect doctrinal tenets. The special seasons of the church-year were, as a matter of fact, connected with the custom of preparing adults for membership in the Church during the Lenten season or of having their preparation

3) Cp. Augusti, *loc. cit.*, 383 ff.; Bennett, *Christian Archeology*, 454 f.; Bingham, *Christian Antiquities*, III: 525 ff.

4) Cf. Augusti, 372 ff.; Bingham, 514 ff.

find its culmination during the celebrations which emphasized the benefits of the work of Christ.

In this connection we take note also of the significant *ceremonies* which were associated with the preparation of catechumens for membership and their reception into the fellowship of the Church. The most complete information on this subject is contained in the *Apostolic Constitutions*. Essential in the preparation of the candidates for membership in the Church was the instruction in the truths of the Christian religion, as we see from the *Didache*, the *Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem, and other documents. The special ceremonies or symbolical usages which were observed in most parts of the Church were the signing of the cross (*signum crucis*), the laying on of hands (*impositio manuum*), the exorcism (small and great), and the giving of salt (*gustus salis*). Toward the end of their instruction period the catechumens were taught the actual text of the Creed (*traditio symboli*), after which they were ready to make a confession of their faith (*redditio symboli*), the day for this ceremony in the Easter cycle being Palm Sunday. At this time the candidates were also given the explanation of the word "Gospel" and of the cherubs in the prophecy of Ezekiel. The ceremonies connected with the administration of Baptism itself were the anointing with oil (later associated with confirmation) and the vesting in white; the neophytes wore these white garments from the vigil of Easter till the Sunday after Easter (*Quasimodogeniti*, *Dominica in albis*). In the case of children this white garment (*vestis*) later was known as the *Westerhemd*. Another ceremony which was generally observed was the use of lighted candles, given into the hands of adult candidates for baptism, and into those of the sponsors when children were christened. The giving of a taste of honey and milk, in token of the new birth, and the kiss of peace were included in the ritual of the Sacrament practically everywhere. That all these usages were connected with statements of Scripture is obvious.⁵⁾

As to the *celebrants*, or *officiants*, of the Sacrament, testimonies beginning with the second century indicate that only the bishop of the diocese was regarded as the legal administrator of Holy Baptism. Even in the *Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans* this authority is assigned to the bishop, although it is not yet made an exclusive function of his office: Οὐκ ἐξόν ἐστι χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου οὔτε βαπτίζειν οὔτε προσφέρειν. Tertullian expresses himself with the same definiteness: "*Baptismus dandi habet ius summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus.*" The same rule is found in the *Apostolic Con-*

5) Cf. Hoefling, *Das Sakrament der Taufe*; Augusti, 423 ff.; 451 ff.; Bingham, III: 529 ff.; IV: 43 ff.

stitutions. In some cases the presbyters were placed on a level with the bishops, or identified with them, but the deacons were expressly excluded. These regulations seem to have been inspired by the appreciation of the great solemnity of the Sacrament in its relation to the communion of saints.⁶⁾

There can be no doubt, on the basis of historical as well as archeological evidence, that baptism of *both children and adults* was practised since the time of the apostles. The very fact that Tertullian opposed paedobaptism points to its prevalence during the third century, and Cyprian felt no hesitancy in advocating the baptism of children. When the African bishop Fidus submitted his problem on paedobaptism, it was not with reference to the abolition of the usage, but with regard to the misgivings of some that the rite should not be administered before the eighth day, since Baptism had taken the place of circumcision. That paedobaptism was the rule in Spain and in Africa appears from the resolutions of the synods of Elvira, of Mileve, and of Girona and from the writings of Origen. The conclusion of Augusti is undoubtedly correct: "Die Alten hatten daher gewiss recht, wenn sie behaupteten, dass die Kindertaufe in der orthodoxen Kirche zu keiner Zeit ausser Gebrauch gewesen sei." (P. 334.) Reference may here incidentally be made to the fact that the Church never sanctioned the baptizing of animals or inanimate objects, and Charlemagne especially prohibited the christening of bells.

The earthly *element* in Holy Baptism in agreement with Scripture (John 3:5; Eph. 5:26) was ever water, and no substitutes were permitted, not even in cases of emergency. When, on a journey through the desert, a Christian used sand in christening a Jewish companion, whom he had converted, the rite was declared ineffectual and the baptism had to be performed with water. Christening with wine was likewise not permitted, although a question seems to have been raised with regard to the mixture of wine and water known as *σφαιρα*. During the period of scholasticism the question was raised whether baptizing with milk, wine, beer, meat-broth, fat, snow, hoarfrost, earth, sand, etc., were permissible, and in every instance the orthodox teachers decided negatively. It was clear to them that the Sacrament could be administered properly only when water was used.

This, naturally, leads to the question as to the *form*, or *manner*, of baptizing. It seems quite evident that the customary manner of administering the Sacrament in the ancient Church was by immersion, in the case of both adults and children. In the *Sacramentarium Gregorianum* the words occur: "*Baptizat sacerdos sub*

6) Cf. Augusti, 362 ff.; Bennett, *Christian Archeology*, 450.

trina mersione." Yet even the Church of Milan declared in the rubric *De Modo Administrandi Baptismi*: "*Ministratur baptismus triplici modo: immersione, infusione aquae, et aspersione.*" Because complete immersion was the customary form of baptism for centuries, the baptisteries were divided into separate rooms for the use of the two sexes, and deaconesses assisted in the christening of women, after the words of the ritual had been pronounced by the ministrant. Yet the teachers of the Church were evidently conscious of the fact that the form of christening was not essential for the validity of the Sacrament. In this they were supported particularly by pictorial and monumental evidence, which shows almost exclusively the act of aspersion by the ministrant. This is true in the case of frescoes from San Calisto in Rome, in a scene and inscription from Aquileia, on a fragment of a glass cup found on the Esquiline, in Rome, and in pictures from Ravenna. A fresco in Santa Pudenziana, in Rome, shows two candidates in a font too small for immersion, and the suggestion of the picture is that of sprinkling or pouring. Thus considerations of an objective exegesis and of historical evidence are further strengthened by archeological evidence, and the mode of baptism is demonstrated to be an adiaiphoron.

The Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper

With reference to the *sacramentum confirmationis*, as distinguished from the *sacramentum initiationis* (namely, in the sense of strengthening the faith wrought through Holy Baptism), we again find much significance in the designations employed throughout the centuries. We find the names δειπνον κυριακόν, *sacra coena*, *coena Domini*; τράπεζα Κυρίου, *mensa Dei*; κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου, breaking of bread, *communio*, *communicatio*; εὐχαριστία, also εὐλογία; προσφορά, *oblatio*; θυσία, *sacrificium*; σύναξις, *congregatio* or *conventus*; missa, *sacramentum altaris*, *corpus Christi*, *cibus Dei*, *cibus angelorum*, *manna coelestis*, *panis Dei*, *panis vitae*, *panis supersubstantialis* (Matt. 6:11), and many others. It is easy to draw conclusions concerning the doctrinal tenets of the men who chose the various names for the Holy Supper. In fact, by arranging the designations chronologically or according to the various divisions of the Church, one can almost trace the development of erroneous doctrines.⁷⁾

Although the Lord instituted the Eucharist in a private home and had only His apostles present for the first celebration, the character of the Sacrament, as indicated in the words of institution and in the First Letter to the Corinthians, caused the Church to insist upon the common meeting-place of the congregation as the

7) Cf. Augusti, 527 ff., 543 ff.

place where the Sacrament should be administered. So strong was this feeling for centuries that private communions of any kind were unknown, and even the sick members of the congregation and the shut-ins received the Eucharist with the other members, since the deacons and subdeacons, after the consecration of the elements, conveyed the latter to the homes of those who could not be present in church, at the altar of the Lord. As Augusti states: "That in times of stress and persecution the Lord's Supper was frequently celebrated in remote places, in huts, caves, etc., was a matter of necessity and emergency, not of a principle." The insistence upon the church as the place for the celebration of the Eucharist was associated with the emphasis upon the Eucharist as a common meal, in which the entire congregation joined in fellowship, the members partaking together of the body and the blood of their Lord. Hence the later developments in the Church in the matter of private masses is not in harmony with the earlier doctrine and usage. For example, the period of liturgical and doctrinal deterioration and decay attached the Mass also to the marriage ceremony, and there it remains in the Roman Catholic Church to this day. The same usage is found in the Anglican Church, where, as Hooker writes, "the public solemnity of marriage is ended with receiving the blessed Sacrament," and the Scottish Church has provided a special collect, Epistle, and Gospel for a marriage Eucharist.⁸⁾ Luther, on the other hand, was definitely opposed to this form of private Communion, even if it was celebrated in the church. Kliefoth writes: "Luther legte seine ordnende Hand an die Formen der Eheschliessung in seinem bekannten Traubuechlein. Er schliesst sich dabei durchaus demjenigen an, was er geschichtlich vorfand; aber er veraenderte es auch nicht bloss darin, dass er statt der lateinischen Brautmesse die deutsche Sprache einfuehrte, sondern auch in sehr wesentlichen Punkten. Zuerst nahm er die Benediktion aus der Verbindung mit der Messe heraus, denn die Messe ist Gemeindegottesdienst und nicht Eheschliessung, und die Eheschliessung wiederum ist kein Sakrament. Er machte also aus der Einsegnung der Ehe einen wirklich selbststaendigen Akt." (*Liturgische Abhandlungen*, I:86 f.) All the Lutheran church orders and service books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries followed Luther in this correct understanding of the distinction obtaining between the Eucharist as a communion and marriage as a rite.

The question of the *elements* in the Lord's Supper caused even more discussion than in the case of Holy Baptism. The chief difficulty was with regard to the contents of the cup, to which the

8) Gwynne, *Primitive Worship and the Prayer-book*, 339 f.

expression γένημα τῆς ἀμπέλου is applied. Now, there never was any doubt in the minds of the teachers of the Church as to the meaning of the expression. And for this reason they resented the use of any substitute for wine, though they consented to the employment of the mixture of wine and water which was known as κραμα. The Council of Carthage in the year 397 passed the resolution: "*Ut in sacramentis corporis et sanguinis Domini nihil amplius offeratur, quam ipse Dominus tradidit, hoc est, panis et vinum aqua mixtum.*" Augusti lists five other councils which passed almost the same resolutions. When the Encratites, to whom also the Kataphrygii, or Ultramontanists, belonged, used water instead of wine, the Church immediately registered its protest. Augustine is emphatic in condemning this error. Other groups that used substitutes for wine were the Aquarii and the Hydroparastatae. When certain congregations in the Orient used a form of brandy, called σίκερα or μέθυσμα, made of dates, fruit, grain, and other ingredients, this action was decidedly condemned. It was chiefly on account of this practise that one of the early councils passed the resolution: "*Non licet in sacrificio divino MELLITUM, quod mulsum appellatur, nec ullum aliud proculum extra vinum cum aqua mixtum offerre.*" The situation within the orthodox Church is brought out by the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which forbid "strong drink" (σίκερα) and all substitutes (ἐκρήθεντα) in the oblation. Among the less flagrant offenders against the accepted usage were the Syrian Jacobites and the Nestorians, who used the juice of either fresh or of dried grapes and sought therein a special significance and an extraordinary perfection. But their practise was also condemned by the Church.⁹⁾

The question of the second element also caused some trouble, in the so-called Azymite Controversy. In 1053 Michael Caerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, attacked the practise of the Western Church, declaring their Eucharist worthless because the unleavened bread used in the West was lifeless and powerless. The Latins retorted by designating their opponents as *fermentarii* or *fermentacei*, and the difference caused a somewhat bitter quarrel. Finally, in 1439, the Council of Florence decreed that each church must follow its own custom, in other words, that the *kind* of bread used was an *adiaphoron*.¹⁰⁾

Of far greater importance, because of the doctrinal implications, was the question of the *sub utraque*, but this belongs into the field of dogmatics rather than into that of archeology, although it is treated also in the latter branch, as by Bingham (V:213 ff.).

9) Cf. Augusti, 560 ff.; Bingham, V:40 ff.

10) Cp. Augusti, 662 f.; Bingham, V:40 ff.

With reference to the *time* of celebrating the Lord's Supper, the Quartodecimanian Controversy had some influence on account of the annual anniversary of the institution. Naturally Maundy Thursday was regarded as the day for the most solemn celebration of the Eucharist. Easter Sunday and the vigils of Easter also received special consideration. But as early as the beginning of the second century we find the Lord's Supper celebrated every Sunday. This seems to appear even from the statement by Pliny and from a passage in the letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians, and is clearly evident from Justin Martyr, who names Sunday as the day for the solemnization of the Eucharist. (*First Apology*, c. 67.) It was expected of all the faithful that they attend the Sacrament regularly, which clearly meant every Sunday, for we read in the *Apostolic Canons*: "If any of the faithful come to church to hear the Scriptures read and stay not to join in the prayers and receive the Communion, let them be excommunicated as the authors of disorder in the Church." And the Council of Antioch issued the decree "Let all those be cast out of the church who come to hear the Scriptures read in the church but do not communicate with the people in prayer or, disorderly, turn away from the participation of the Eucharist."¹¹

Although we are accustomed to think of the distribution of the Holy Communion entirely in connection with the office of the ministry, there was at least one occasion when it was necessary to state that women were not permitted to consecrate the elements for use in the Lord's Supper. On the other hand, the special solemnity associated with the Eucharist is shown in the regulations concerning the ministers of the Sacrament. Thus the rule that the consecration should never be undertaken by any one but a bishop or a presbyter, never by a deacon, was generally observed. Justin Martyr speaks of the *προεστὼς τῶν ἀδελφῶν* as administering the Eucharist, the *Apostolic Constitutions* name the *ἀρχιερεὺς* or the *ἐπίσκοπος*. Later the bishops officiated only on special occasions and in particular at High Mass. In this connection reference must be made to the development of the Eucharistic vestments, which became more and more elaborate as time went on, the *casula*, or cope, receiving special attention as the one significant garment in the celebration of the Holy Communion.

The discussion of the many ceremonies introduced into the liturgy of the Mass would lead us far beyond the scope of this article. But one significant fact should be noted, namely, that there was no elevation of the host for divine adoration in the ancient Church until the rise of transubstantiation and that there

11) See Bingham, V:355 f.

is no evidence of the adoration of the host before the twelfth or the thirteenth century, that is, about the time when the doctrine of transubstantiation was fully established in the Church.

As to the *communicants*, or those who were admitted to the Lord's Supper, one strange phenomenon must be noted, namely, the fact that children and even infants should partake of the Eucharist, the argument being that salvation was not possible without the Sacrament. This view was based, for the most part, on a false exposition of John 6, especially of verse 53. Cyprian expressly states that the children received *cibum et poculum Domini*. The *Apostolic Constitutions* and Augustine also refer to the custom, and the Oriental Church has retained the usage till the present time, while the evangelical churches, mindful of 1 Cor. 11:28, 29, have insisted upon greater maturity in the communicants.¹²⁾

P. E. KRETZMANN

The Christian Congregation: Its Rights and Duties According to God's Word and Our Lutheran Confessions

Essay read at the Centennial Convention of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio,
and Other States, St. Louis, Mo., June, 1938

Introduction

In my two brief addresses I shall endeavor to present to you, in their essential features, the paramount Biblical truths which Dr. Walther has propounded in his immortal book *Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staat unabhaengigen ev.-luth. Ortsgemeinde. Eine Sammlung von Zeugnissen aus den Bekenntnisschriften der evang.-luth. Kirche und aus den Privatschriften rechtgläubiger Lehrer derselben*; which means, in literal translation: *The Correct Form of a Local Ev. Luth. Congregation which Is Independent of the State. A Collection of Testimonies from the Confessions of the Ev. Luth. Church and the Private Writings of Its Orthodox Teachers*. This book was published by Dr. Walther, upon the request of the Pastoral Conference of St. Louis, in 1863, sixteen years after the organization of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. Originally it was composed as an essay to be read at the convention of the Western District of the Missouri Synod, in session at Crete, Ill., beginning May 15, 1862. Since, however, at this convention the treatise for lack of time could not be given adequate consideration, the author was asked to publish it in book form.

In his Foreword, Dr. Walther first calls attention to a work which he had published eleven years before the *Rechte Gestalt*,

12) Cf. Augusti, 339, 580, 635 ff.; Bingham, V:154 ff., 178.

the very timely and valuable monograph entitled *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (Erlangen, 1852); which means: *The Voice of Our Church on the Question of the Church and the Ministry* (Erlangen, 1852). This excellent treatise was designed to oppose all Romanizing attempts in the question of church polity and to demonstrate what both Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions teach with respect to the prerogatives and duties of true believers organized into Christian congregations. Walther next points out that his new essay merely applied in a wider scope the principles laid down in his book on the Church and the Ministry, his intention being to prove that the Lutheran doctrine of the Church and the Ministry as stated by him does not lead to "anarchistic, ochlocratic, anabaptistic, and separatistic conditions," on the contrary, that it forms the safest foundation on which a local congregation may be built in its correct Biblical form. Moreover, it shows that the peculiar structure of the Christian congregation as presented by him is in complete agreement with all that our ancient orthodox Lutheran teachers, though themselves living in a State Church and under a consistorial organization, have taught with regard to the Church, the Public Ministry, Church Polity, and the like. And last, though not least, Dr. Walther reminds his readers that the "correct form" which he was now picturing to them was not something novel and untried but a truly dependable form, which had been amply tested by the churches of the Missouri Synod for twenty-four years. Thus Dr. Walther's *Die rechte Gestalt* vindicates the authority and dignity of the Christian congregation over against all Romanizing errors on this point. So much regarding the history and purpose of Dr. Walther's great work *The Correct Form of a Local Ev. Luth. Congregation*.

It is well for us at this time to remind ourselves of the Biblical principles which Dr. Walther seventy-five years ago (1863—1938) impressed upon our Synod with respect to the rights and duties of the Christian congregation according to God's Word and our Lutheran Confessions. Of course, since our presentation of the subject must be so very brief, only a few salient points can be considered. Nevertheless, even this inadequate presentation may serve as a public confession of what we believe, teach, and maintain on the weighty issues of congregational rights and duties. In presenting the subject, I shall follow Dr. Walther's own clear and logical representation. He divides his treatise into three major parts, discussing in these, first, the *rights*, secondly, the *duties*, thirdly, the *exercise of the rights and duties* of Christian congregations organized (according to Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions) independently of the State.

Before discussing these weighty subjects, Dr. Walther first offers a precise and thoroughly Scriptural description of a Christian congregation, organized and established according to God's Word and our Lutheran Confessions. Such a Christian congregation is, as he says, "a gathering of Christian believers at a certain place." However, not any accidental gathering of believers at a certain place constitutes a Christian congregation in the Biblical and Lutheran sense in which this term is here used. This convention, for example, although it is large and influential, composed of Christian believers who are assembled for the Lord's service, is not a local Christian congregation. A Christian congregation, according to Dr. Walther's definition, is a gathering of Christians especially established and intended for the proclamation of God's Word in its truth and purity and the administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's institution, as set forth in Scripture. And what makes such a congregation distinctively Lutheran in a confessional sense is its avowed purpose to proclaim God's pure Word and to administer His holy Sacraments in agreement with our Lutheran Confessions. Of course, such a gathering of Christians is not a "communion of saints" in the sense of the invisible Church, in which *every* member is a true child of God; but local or visible churches include in their *external* membership also nominal Christians, or hypocrites and, in places where Christian discipline is being neglected, even manifest sinners. Nevertheless hypocrites and nominal Christians are, properly speaking, true members neither of the invisible nor of the visible Church. They are only *outward adherents* of the Church as, for instance, to use a rather crude but striking illustration often employed by our sturdy fathers, mud attaches itself to the wheels of a wagon on heavy, wet roads.

All these important points are further supplemented, explained, and confirmed by Dr. Walther in six brief paragraphs, in which, on the basis of Scripture, our Lutheran Confessions, and private Lutheran witnesses, he shows: 1. that the distinctive marks of a true Christian congregation are God's pure Word and the unadulterated Sacraments; 2. that a congregation is Lutheran only if it believes and accepts in doctrine and practise the Lutheran Confessions; 3. that it is *not* necessary for a Christian congregation (to merit this dignity) to have a distinctive organization or constitution or definite ceremonies prescribed by men; 4. that the presence of nominal Christians in local, or visible, churches must be expected; 5. that it is not sufficient to judge a local congregation merely by the name *Lutheran* which it happens to bear; and 6. that a congregation is not an orthodox Lutheran church simply because in it God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions happen to

be present, but that God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions must be actually believed and publicly confessed. All these are vital points, which should claim our attention and study today when syncretism and indifferentism prevail in so many denominations to the lamentable injury of Christ's holy cause and kingdom.

When speaking of the local Christian congregation in his book *Die rechte Gestalt*, Dr. Walther has in mind congregations that are organized *independently of the State*. That is the ideal, indeed, the only Scriptural and Lutheran form of a church organization. Church and State must be separate, as Christ commands in Matt. 22:21 and as our Lutheran Church confesses in the Augsburg Confession (Art. 28): "The spiritual and temporal rules must not be mingled or fused into each other." In the Church even Christian princes and kings are to be considered only *brethren in the faith*, not persons of authority, unless, of course, the Church, in her own sphere elects them into offices of authority. The State, moreover, is not within the Church, as though the Church were the larger and the State the smaller realm, but the State is outside the Church, though outwardly, it is true, the Church is *domiciled in the State*. Church-members owe obedience to the State, not as Christian church-members but as citizens and subjects of the State. Dr. Walther thus clearly and correctly distinguishes between Church and State and emphasizes strict separation of the two as a basic principle inculcated both in Scripture and in our Lutheran Confessions.

I. The Rights of a Christian Congregation

After having defined the Christian congregation in the sense of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, Dr. Walther points out its *rights*. These rights are comprehended in the so-called *Office of the Keys*, which Christ, the Head and the Lord of the Church, originally and directly has given to the *entire Church* (Matt. 16:15-19; 18:17-20; John 20:22, 23), and this indeed in such a way that the Office of the Keys, as a peculiar, spiritual church-power, belong to *each local congregation* in precisely the same manner and degree, no matter whether it is small or large, obscure or prominent. In his explanatory paragraphs following this first thesis Dr. Walther, on the basis of Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions, shows in detail: 1. that the Office of the Keys indeed embraces *all* the rights of Christian congregations, since it is the power to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments, especially the power to remit and retain sins; 2. that these rights have been bestowed by Christ upon the entire Church, not *mediately through ordained ministers*, as the Romanists and Romanizing church-bodies assert, but *originally and directly*, so that each believer as a member of the congregation should claim and

use them (Matt. 18:19, 20; 1 Cor. 3:22); 3. that it is not necessary for any Christian congregation to be joined with others into some larger executive or judiciary church-body in order that it may exercise its divinely bestowed prerogatives, but that it may and should exercise these just because it is a local congregation; 4. that hypocrites, or nominal Christians, that are found in local churches do not possess the rights of the Office of the Keys, since this is given to true believers only (Matt. 16:15-19). Dr. Walther thus, without any qualification whatever, exalts the Christian congregation to the proper sphere and dignity which it possesses by the direct promise and declaration of God's Word.

That the Christian congregation truly possesses the Office of the Keys, and together with this the entire spiritual power and authority to ordain and execute all things required for the management and government of its affairs, Dr. Walther, in a further thesis, proves from the fact that Scripture denominates all true church-members *priests and kings* before God, in particular, "a chosen generation," a "royal priesthood," a "holy nation," a "peculiar people," a "spiritual house," a "holy priesthood," to show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light and to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Moreover, the prerogatives of the Office of the Keys are guaranteed to each believing church-member as such by the following terms of dignity and honor conferred upon them by Christ: the Lord's anointed (1 John 2:20, 27); Christ's chaste bride and virgin (2 Cor. 11:2); Christ's body and temple, in which God dwells (1 Cor. 12:27; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20); brethren, equal among themselves, but all alike subject to Christ (Matt. 23:8-11); possessors of all spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 3:21-23), even of the supreme judgment (Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 6:2-4). If the true members of Christian congregations are so highly exalted in rank and dignity by God, then their rights as Christian church-members must not be curtailed or even removed by tyrannical church lords or overbearing church councils. Thus again Dr. Walther upholds the Scriptural and Lutheran principle of true church democracy.

II. The Duties of a Christian Congregation

But since the Christian congregation possesses rights, it also has *duties*; and of these Dr. Walther speaks in the second part of his great treatise. Of the duties of a Christian congregation the first and foremost is that of *preaching God's Word* (Col. 3:16), and this in such a manner that Christ's Word indeed dwells richly in its midst and is disseminated abroad as the divine seed begetting spiritual and eternal life (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; 1 Pet. 1:23). The obligation of preaching the Word embraces also that of *administering the Sacraments* according to Christ's institution

(Matt. 28:10, 20; 1 Cor. 11:24 ff.). Moreover, it is the duty of the Christian congregation to provide for purity of doctrine and of life in its midst; it must therefore in the fear of God and in accordance with His Word practise church discipline (Matt. 18:15-18; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 6:1-8; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10, 11, etc.). Nor must the Christian laity surrender their right of judging the doctrine of the clergy; for it is theirs by special divine will and grant (John 6:45; Matt. 7:15; Rom. 16:17). Furthermore, since all believers are *brethren in the faith* and infinitely precious in God's sight, the Christian congregation must liberally provide for the poor and needy in its midst (Gal. 6:10; Rom. 12:13; Gal. 2:9, 10; Jas. 1:27; 1 Thess. 4:11, 12; Deut. 15:4, etc.). Again, since the Christian congregation represents Christ and His true religion in this world, it must see to it that all the things it does are done decently and in order lest offense be given within and without its pale (1 Cor. 14:33, 40; 2 Cor. 8:20, 21; Col. 2:5). Moreover, because God is a God of peace, the Christian congregation must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in order that true unity in doctrine and practise may be attained and preserved among the churches professing the same sound Christian faith (Eph. 4:3; 1 Thess. 4:9, 10). It is presupposed, of course, that in case of temporal need and suffering one church should lovingly and liberally provide for the other (Rom. 15:26, 27; 2 Cor. 8:19). In the same manner it is also the duty of the Christian congregation to build up in ever-increasing measure the *Christian Church as a whole*, and to this end it must be diligent in missionary work both in its own community and beyond this in more distant and even far-away foreign fields (Acts 11:21-23; 15:1 ff.). All these duties are of eminent importance and dare not be neglected. Briefly expressed, the Christian congregation must glorify God by keeping and preaching His Word and exercising Christian love both temporally and spiritually, so that, as far as it is concerned, all men may be abundantly blessed by God through the means of grace with all spiritual and heavenly benedictions. Also here Christian love, exercised both toward God and the neighbor, in true faith and in the fear of God, is "the fulfilling of the Law" (Rom. 13:10). May God grant us grace and strength at all times fully to appreciate our glorious prerogatives and obligations as Christian church-members to the everlasting praise of the name of our divine Redeemer!

III. The Exercise of Its Prerogatives and Obligations by the Christian Congregation

A. The Holding of Voters' Meetings.—In order that the Christian congregation may competently and fully exercise its divinely imposed rights and duties, it must, in the first place, maintain proper

public church assemblies in which it considers and determines all things that are necessary for its special church management. Such public executive church assemblies Christ presupposes when in Matt. 18:17, 18 He issues the command: "Tell it unto the church. . . . Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Such executive church assemblies were therefore generally maintained in the first Christian congregations, as the Book of Acts informs us. In Acts 1:15, 23-26, for example, we are told how such an executive church assembly elected Matthias in place of Judas Iscariot, who had hanged himself after betraying the Lord; in Acts 15:5, 23, how such a church assembly decided whether the Gentile Christians should be burdened with circumcision or not; in Acts 6:2, how such a church assembly chose members of the congregation to serve at the tables in place of the apostles; in Acts 15:30, how such a church assembly determined what rules of conduct the Gentile churches were to observe, etc. In 1 Tim. 5:20 St. Paul demands such executive church assemblies everywhere when he says: "Them that sin rebuke before all that others also may fear."

These executive church assemblies we commonly call *voters' meetings*; for we admit to them, as authorized to vote, only the adult male members of the church, excluding both women and children, the former because of God's special injunction in 1 Cor. 14:34, 35; 1 Tim. 2:10-15, and the other because they are not yet able to judge matters adequately and, besides, are commanded to be subject to the elders (1 Cor. 10:15; 1 Pet. 5:5). It is understood, of course, that also in these two cases true Christian love and wisdom should be observed, so that for the work of the church the fine talents and gifts both of the women and the young people of the congregation may be secured. It is understood, moreover, that with regard to all spiritual blessings there is complete equality between men, women, and children (Gal. 3:28). This, however, does not invalidate or abrogate any social distinction which God in His infinite wisdom has seen fit to institute for the welfare of His Church.

The executive church assemblies *are to be conducted* according to God's Word and the principle of brotherly love under the leadership of those whom the congregation has chosen for this purpose; and here indeed God needs and employs many and various talents, such as apostles and elders (Acts 15:6); elders, especially those who labor in the Word and doctrine (1 Tim. 5:17); exhorters and rulers (Rom. 12:8); prophets, teachers, miracle-workers, healers, helpers, managers, etc. (1 Cor. 12:28). Let the modern Church, however, remember that many of the spiritual gifts in use in the early Christian Church have now disappeared

and that the pastoral ministry, the ministry of the Word, is the chief ministry and in itself comprises all others. All who assist in church management, or government, assist only the ministry of the Word; for their specific work should only expedite and facilitate the blessed Gospel ministry.

Subjects, or topics, for discussion and adjudication in voters' meetings are among others: 1. matters of doctrine and life (Acts 15:1 ff.); 2. The establishment and administration of all offices in the church (Acts 1:15-26; 6:1-6; 2 Cor. 8:19); 3. questions of church polity and church discipline (Matt. 18:17-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:6-11; 1 Tim. 5:20); 4. the removal of offenses (within the congregation) (Acts 21:20-22); 5. the adjustment of quarrels and disputes (1 Cor. 6:1-8); 6. vital matters pertaining to good order and Christian service, such as church propriety, missionary work, congregational and synodical finance problems, youth problems, etc. (1 Cor. 14:26-40; 16:1, 2). In other words, the voting members should in their meetings discuss and manage all things that pertain to the weal and woe of the congregation, since they are the supreme executives of the church.

As said before, all matters pertaining to Christian doctrine and conscience must be adjudicated unanimously, according to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (Is. 8:20), while matters pertaining to adiaphora, that is to say, to things neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, are to be adjudged according to the principles of love and equity, after thorough deliberation in Christian order, by a majority vote (1 Cor. 16:14; 14:40; Col. 2:5). If by any chance the congregation should decide or decree anything contrary to God's Word, such an enactment would *per se* be null and void and must, upon being recognized as unscriptural, be so declared by a vote of disavowal on the part of the congregation. That a congregation has no authority to determine and enforce anything not established in God's Word, Dr. Walther proves: 1. from what Scripture says of *Christian liberty*, which must not be violated (Acts 15:10; 1 Cor. 7:25; Gal. 5:1; Col. 2:16, 20); 2. from Christ's injunction forbidding the Church to teach anything that He Himself has not inculcated in His Word (Matt. 28:20; Is. 29:13; Matt. 15:8, 9); 3. from the example of the apostles, who never permitted human laws in the Church to tyrannize the conscience (1 Cor. 7:35; 2 Cor. 1:24); 4. from the fact that God alone is Lawgiver in His Church (Is. 33:22; Jas. 4:12). For these reasons all adiaphora are not to be enforced by way of command or conscience, but they are to be inaugurated by free and willing submission because and inasmuch as they serve the cause of Christian order and propriety.

In order that all things may be done decently and in order and that Christian love may not be violated, every voters' meeting

must be duly announced in advance, so that, if possible, all members may know time and place of the meeting. If in spite of this, members fail to attend, they waive their privilege of voting and may not oppose the approved measure by subsequent demurrer. However, for the sake of Christian love and peace it is advisable that important resolutions, which may be postponed, should be ratified in the ensuing voters' meeting, before they are accepted as the final decision of the congregation, since this respite will give dissatisfied members opportunity to voice their objection. In all such cases, however, no objection should proceed from personal stubbornness or any selfish motive.

It goes without saying that all essential transactions should be carefully preserved in the minutes of the congregation, which for the sake of supplementation or emendation ought to be read either at the close of the same meeting or at the beginning of the next (Acts 15:23-31). Each meeting, of course, should begin with a suitable prayer by the pastor or, in his absence, by any person designated for this purpose (Matt. 18:19; Acts 6:4). A more extended devotion is even preferable to a brief prayer, and, if possible, there ought to be some doctrinal discussion at every voters' meeting, since God's Word is the basis, source, and norm of our whole Church's faith and life.

B. Inculcation of God's Word. — In order that God's Word may abundantly dwell and have free course among men, Christian congregations must establish and maintain the paramount office of the public, or pastoral, ministry (Titus 1:5; Eph. 4:11, 14). That it is not optional with Christian congregations to establish the pastoral ministry or not is emphatically affirmed, on the basis of Scripture, by our Confessions. (Cf. Apology, Art. 13: "The Church has God's command that it should ordain ministers and deacons.") Also Luther writes: "God has *commanded* the Church to appoint persons for the pastoral office and the ministry of the Sacraments." (*Wittenberg Reformation Articles*, 1545; *Rechte Gestalt*, p. 68.) The appointment of the Christian ministry implies the due election and calling of pastors, and this must be done according to God's Word and with due deliberation and ardent common prayer, also with due consultation of experienced pastors in our Church, especially in conference with the Visitor or the District President, who may also be present at the voters' meeting in which the pastor is called (Titus 1:5; Acts 1:15-26; 6:1-6; 14:23). Every voting member has the privilege to suggest a suitable candidate (Acts 1:23). The fitness of each candidate should then be thoroughly discussed in accordance with 1 Tim. 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 2:15, 24-26, and other passages, and the candidate chosen by the assembled voters or at least by the majority should be regarded as the choice of the

congregation (provided, however, that no member seriously objects to him for valid reasons). The call should at least normally be extended to the chosen candidate by means of a formal *instrument of vocation* (1 Cor. 16:3), in which the called minister is obligated to fulfil his ministry according to God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions (Col. 4:17; Acts 15:23; 2 Tim. 1:13, 14; 1 Pet. 5:1-4, etc.) and in which the congregation on its part solemnly promises to regard and treat him as its properly called pastor and shepherd, to listen to his instruction and admonition, and to support him according to the best of their ability (Luke 10:16; 1 Thess. 5:12; 2:13; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:13; 1 Tim. 5:17; Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:13, 14; Gal. 6:6). After the candidate has accepted the call, he, before serving the church as pastor, should be solemnly ordained and installed, so that he may be properly inducted into his sacred office (Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 3:10; 1 Tim. 4:14; Acts 13:2, 3). It is self-evident that Christian congregations may call only candidates whose orthodoxy and ability to minister are beyond question; that is to say, who have received their diploma from seminaries which are recognized by our Church as truly Lutheran and as providing adequate instruction, or who have passed a duly instituted *colloquium*. In the matter of calling Christian pastors more care ought to be exercised by our congregations in the future than has been done in recent years in order that the kingdom of Christ may not suffer injury but be duly built up and extended in the world.

In order that the Word of God may dwell richly in a congregation, it must see to it that all Sundays and holy days are rightly observed for divine worship and that all members diligently attend the divine services (Luke 11:28; Acts 2:46; Heb. 10:24, 25). Moreover, it is the duty of the congregation to insist upon the proper Christian education of the young by means of home instruction, church-schools, Sunday-schools, catechumen instruction, and the like, in order that souls may not be lost through the fault of those who are responsible to God for them. Infants should be brought to Holy Baptism as soon as possible in order that not by any culpable delay they may be deprived of salvation (1 Cor. 4:1; Mark 10:13 ff.). While confirmation is not a Sacrament but merely a church rite, it should not be contemned, but devoutly maintained, especially because of the *instruction* and the *confession* which it involves (Matt. 21:14, 15), and especially, that our members may well understand the great blessings of *Absolution* and the *Holy Supper*, which should be received devoutly and frequently, oftener than this has been the case in many of our churches (John 20:23; 2 Cor. 2:10; 1 Cor. 11:20, 26). Before attending the Holy Supper, the members should announce their in-

tention of so doing to the pastor in order that they may receive from him due instruction, admonition, warning, and comfort, as the case may require (Heb. 13:17; 1 Cor. 4:1; Matt. 7:6). Our excellent confessional services, held in connection with Holy Communion, should be continued and not dropped, as has been done in some places. Furthermore, in order that the Christian home influence may be preserved intact, *Christian marriage* is to be kept by our congregations on the high level of honor and dignity on which God's Word has placed it, and all Scriptural commands relative to betrothment and the conduct of marriage by Christians should be diligently inculcated and heeded (1 Cor. 7:39; 1 Tim. 4:3-5). In all cases of sickness, death, and similar afflictions church-members should seek Christian instruction and consolation, learning to submit themselves piously and joyously to God's good and gracious will (Jas. 5:14, 15). Finally, when God removes their loved ones from this vale of tears, they should accord them the respect and honor of a Christian burial (Acts 8:2), which, however, should not be misused to serve those that have denied the faith.

Thus the entire life of Christian church-members should be sanctified and blessed by the Word of God and prayer. To this end also the Christian congregation must amply provide for proper Christian education and instruction in order that its youth may be reared in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Matt. 18:10; Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:6, 7; 2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 2:20). The Christian congregation should also contribute its share towards training able Christian pastors and teachers in order that its Christian youth may be properly cared for. Christian teachers should not merely be appointed or engaged but duly called and properly supported, since their teaching ministry is a part of the public ministry which God has enjoined upon His Church (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28). It is needless to say that the Christian congregation should not permit separatistic conventicles, that is, private or even secret religious meetings, under the spiritual care of any other than the duly appointed pastor (1 Cor. 11:18; Jas. 3:1; 1 Cor. 12:29; Rom. 10:15).

C. Maintaining Purity in Doctrine and Life.—All members of Christian congregations should seek to grow in the blessed knowledge of God's Word (2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 1:5), so that they may be able rightly to judge the doctrine which is being proclaimed or submitted to them (Acts 17:11; Matt. 7:15, 16; 1 John 4:1; 1 Cor. 10:15), and stand firm and immovable against all manner of error (Eph. 4:14; Heb. 5:12). Unless our members do this diligently and cheerfully, it will be extremely hard to maintain that purity of doctrine and life which God so graciously has entrusted to us. Moreover, the Christian congregation should also elect elders to aid the pastor in the maintenance of Christian order and

discipline (1 Tim. 5:17; Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 12:28). Elders must have all the qualifications which are prescribed in Holy Scripture, be themselves well instructed in God's Word, be honorable men, and enjoy a good reputation within and without the church (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-12). Again, the congregation must see to it that only such books are used in its midst (that is, in church, in school, and in the homes) as do not contain anything contrary to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Tim. 1:13; Gal. 2:4, 5). In particular, it should be deeply concerned about what its young people read and earnestly warn them against all that is injurious to their spiritual welfare.

Only such persons are to be received as communicant members as may be regarded as true Christians. That is to say: 1. They must be baptized (Eph. 5:35, 36; 1 Cor. 12:13); 2. they must publicly confess the Christian faith as it is set forth in Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (Gal. 2:4; 2 Cor. 6:14, 15, 17; 2 John 10, 11; Eph. 4:3-6); 3. they must lead a Christian life and be without offense to those within and without the Church (1 Cor. 5:9-13; 10:21; Matt. 7:6). Church-members who refuse obedience to God's Word either in profession or life should be properly dealt with and disciplined according to God's Word, to the end that they may see the error of their way and repent (Matt. 18:15, 16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 2:6; 2 Thess. 3:14, 15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 2:14). In case they refuse to heed God's Word, they must be excommunicated after due fraternal admonition and warning, as clearly outlined in Scripture (Matt. 18:17-20; 1 Cor. 5:13; Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10, 11). Since by their perversity excommunicated persons have destroyed the bond of spiritual fellowship, they should no longer be regarded and treated as Christian brethren, though excommunication does not exclude them from all necessary social or commercial association (1 Cor. 5:9-11). Such members as maliciously refuse to support or uphold the Christian excommunication of manifest sinners in the church must themselves be disciplined (1 Cor. 5:1, 2), though, of course, excommunication must not be executed until the whole case is clear beyond all doubt. (Cf. Paul's detailed instruction on the matter in 1 Cor. 5:1-13.) Penitent persons should readily and publicly be absolved and received back into the Church (2 Cor. 2:6-11). Also on this point the spirit of Christian love should guide the congregation in directing all things according to God's Word, and the true aim and object must be the glory of God and the good of all concerned in the matter.

Christian pastors and teachers may not be arbitrarily dismissed from their office, for they have been called to serve the congregation until God Himself severs the divinely established relation between them and their parish by calling them to other

fields, or until they have become incompetent to administer their sacred office either through illness, old age, or other similiar causes. However, if ministers lapse into error or wicked life and thus give offense to church-members and those without, they are to be disciplined according to God's Word, and in case they refuse to repent, they are to be deprived of their office and excommunicated from the church. (1 Tim. 5:19; Matt. 7:15; 1 Tim. 3:7; Matt. 18:15-18.)

Finally, the congregation should exercise all possible care that neither the entire church nor individual members maintain spiritual fellowship with heterodox or unbelieving persons or groups, thus becoming guilty of syncretism or religious unionism (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 John 10:11; Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10; etc.). Christian loyalty and confessionalism demand that the congregation attest the truth in opposition to all error in doctrine and life by both word and deed; and hence true Christians dare not render themselves guilty of syncretism. This embraces also the question of membership in the unchristian lodges, which certainly is not compatible with church-membership.

D. The Care of the Needy. — It goes without saying that Christian congregations are in duty bound liberally to supply their pastors and teachers with a livelihood adequate to their needs and in accord with the high dignity of their sacred office (Matt. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 9:14; 2 Tim. 2:3, 4). Deliberate refusal to obey God's Word in this respect will not only impair the efficiency of the ministers but also call down upon the miserly church-members God's righteous wrath and punishment (Gal. 6:6, 7). However, the Christian congregation must also provide for the needy in its midst, such as widows, orphans, the sick, and the infirm, in short, for those who are unable to support themselves and cannot be cared for properly by their own relatives or friends (1 Tim. 5:16; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:26; 1 Thess. 4:11, 12; 2 Cor. 8:13, 14; Matt. 25:35-45; etc.). In case of special chastisements inflicted by God upon entire congregations or synodical Districts, such as pestilence, drought, floods, devastation by war, etc., the afflicted churches should liberally be provided for by believers and not be permitted to suffer want (2 Cor. 9:1 ff.). In general, the Christian congregation should not permit any brother or sister to go begging of the world or join unchristian secret societies for the sake of the support which these promise, but they should regard it as their privilege to help those in need who are of the household of faith. This, of course, does not exclude all legitimate means of help accessible to those who are in need (proper support by the Government and the like). Holy Scripture is especially emphatic in inculcating the assistance of Christians in times of sickness and death, so that no one Christian brother may be deprived of proper medical help or a Christian

burial simply because he is utterly without temporal means (Matt. 25:36; 1 Tim. 5:10; Matt. 14:12; Acts 8:2).

E. Proper Management of All Church Matters.—In order that all affairs of the congregation may be managed decently and in order, the pastor should keep a careful record of all the members of his church, together with all the ministerial acts and the services, so that there will be an authentic account of all matters pertaining to the congregation and its progress and work. The secretary of the church should conscientiously write all minutes, and the treasurer and the finance committees in general should be exceedingly conscientious in dealing with the moneys contributed by the members for home and foreign purposes (2 Cor. 8:20, 21), accounting for them from time to time in clear and simple terms, intelligible to all members. For the proper care of the poor and needy special almoners or administrators should be chosen, who at all times should be ready to give account of their work and the disbursements made (Rom. 12:8; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). It is needless to say that Christian congregations should also provide all the necessary buildings, such as churches, schools, parish-houses, parsonages, etc., and keep them in good repair, under the supervision of the trustees or whoever may be appointed for this duty. For divine worship the congregation should supply all books and other things needed, such as the Bible, an agenda, Communion sets, a baptismal font, and the like, and have the janitor keep them in proper condition. Pews should not be rented in Lutheran churches, but the entire church should be open to all alike, rich and poor.

In all meetings, no matter of what nature they may be, all transactions should be governed by God's Word, adiaphora being decided by the majority, though at times the majority may be bound by Christian love to yield to the wish of the minority (1 Cor. 11:14; 2 Cor. 10:8). While meetings are in progress, the chairman should see to it that all who desire to speak do so in due order and that peace and good will among the members be preserved (1 Cor. 14:30; 11:16). The elections should be so conducted that all members know who the candidates are and be free to vote for whomever they will. In case members should be cited to appear at the meeting, they should be notified in such a way that any possible mistake or misunderstanding may be avoided, preferably in writing and through a responsible person. All persons whom the congregation chooses or appoints for regular ministries in the church should be properly instructed as to their duties in order that they may fully understand what is required of them (1 Pet. 4:10, 11). Each congregation, too, should have an approved constitution in which all rules and regulations are laid down in clear and unmistakable language. Approved constitutions may now be

had at our Concordia Publishing House. While all members, even the relatively poor, should learn to contribute regularly and liberally for home and outside purposes, no one is to be coerced in the matter of giving; all gifts are to be secured through proper application of God's Word, love being the true motive of Christian giving (Matt. 10:10; 1 Cor. 9:14; 2 Cor. 8:12; 9:7).

F. The Duty of the Christian Congregation toward Its Sister Churches.—The Christian congregation should not merely seek its own interests but should keep in mind also its sister churches, joined to it by the unity of faith. This implies: 1. that Christian congregations pray for one another and for the Church of Christ as a whole (Eph. 6:18); 2. that they strive to establish and retain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, always seeking church union on the basis of God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions and avoiding factions and schisms (1 Cor. 1:10); 3. that neighboring congregations arrive at a clear understanding with regard to members and other matters, so that disputes may not arise and injure the spread of the kingdom of God (Titus 1:5; Gal. 2:9; 1 Pet. 4:15; 5:2; Heb. 10:25); 4. that members seeking release are given transfers and that without such transfers no persons be received as members by sister churches (Acts 18:27; 3 John 8-10); 5. that no Christian congregation receive into membership such as have been rightfully excommunicated by a sister church (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:14, 15); 6. that all brethren appealing to it, such as those persecuted on account of their faith or unduly excommunicated by tyrannical churches, whose action cannot be accepted as in accord with God's Word, or visitors from sister congregations be received and treated as fellow-believers (1 Pet. 4:9; Rom. 16:1, 2; 1 Cor. 16:10, 11; John 16:2; Matt. 25:35); 7. that a congregation when calling the pastor of a sister congregation or considering the call extended to its own pastor by a sister congregation receive and satisfy every demand of Christian love and fellowship (Matt. 7:12; 1 Cor. 16:14); 8. that Christian congregations assist one another with mutual advice, assistance, and financial and moral support, as the case may require (Acts 15:1 ff.; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 8:1-14; 9:1-15); 9. that larger Christian congregations permit their pastor to serve those smaller churches or parishes which as yet are unable to call their own minister (affiliate churches), in all these things observing God's important counsel given in 1 Pet. 4:10, 11.

G. The Duty of the Christian Congregation toward the Church as a Whole.—In order that the Christian Church may be established throughout the entire world, it is the privilege and the duty of individual Christian congregations to work conjointly with others towards executing all measures by which Christ's kingdom may be brought to men. In particular, it is the duty of the Christian

congregation: 1. to provide for the education of Christian young men for the service in Christ's vineyard as pastors, teachers, and missionaries (1 Cor. 12:7); 2. to have the Word of God preached to those in the diaspora, to such as are inadequately or not at all provided with the Bread of Life (Acts 11:21, 22); 3. to disseminate the Word of God also in writing, in particular, through the spread of the Bible, prayer-books, postils, and the like (1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:8); 4. to carry on mission-work, not only at home but also abroad, among those who have not yet heard the name of their divine Redeemer (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Pet. 2:9). It should also be willing to join with other orthodox churches in establishing a large church-body by which the work of the Lord may be accomplished all the more effectively (Eph. 4:3-6; 1 Cor. 12:7). May God grant us His Holy Spirit that we may serve Him in true unity of faith and with all possible zeal in order that His name may be hallowed, His kingdom come, and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven! Amen.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

Die Pastorkonferenz zu Milet

Apost. 20, 17—38

In den Schriften des Neuen Testaments bekommen wir einen Einblick in das apostolische Gemeindeleben. Wir lernen aus der Apostelgeschichte, wie die Gemeinde zu Jerusalem gegründet und wie sie geleitet wurde und welche Schwierigkeiten sie hatte. Auch werden wir bekannt gemacht mit den Verhältnissen in den Gemeinden zu Korinth und in Galatien und mit dem, was Paulus tat, um die Schäden zu heilen. Alles dieses ist in der Bibel unter anderm auch zu dem Zweck aufgezeichnet, damit die Pastoren dadurch unterrichtet werden, wie sie ihre Gemeinden regieren und in dieser und jener Lage sich verhalten sollen.

Doch wir werden nicht nur in das apostolische Gemeindeleben eingeführt, sondern in der Apostelgeschichte wird uns auch eine Synode und eine Pastorkonferenz beschrieben. Die Synode Apost. 15. Wenn man den Bericht dieser ersten Kirchenversammlung liest, dann erkennt man alsbald, daß unsere Synodalversammlungen danach eingerichtet sind. Es wurde in Jerusalem über die Lehre verhandelt, und brennende Tagesfragen wurden besprochen. Das Resultat wurde den Gemeinden mitgeteilt. Auch zankte man sich, wie das auf unsern Synoden auch hier und da geschehen ist.

Die Pastorkonferenz wird Apost. 20 beschrieben. Seit dem Bestehen unserer Synode sind in unserer Mitte unzählige Pastorkonferenzen abgehalten worden. Die Synode macht es in ihrer Kon-

stitution den Pastoren zur Pflicht, dies zu tun, und überwacht die Konferenzen. Sie haben sich als großen Segen erwiesen, als *post-graduate courses*. Sollen die Konferenzen von Segen sein, so ist nötig, daß sie fleißig besucht werden, daß da tüchtig gearbeitet wird, daß nicht zu viel Zeit verwendet wird auf Sachen, die auf der Peripherie liegen, sondern daß solche Fragen besprochen werden, die im Zentrum stehen. Wir stehen in Gefahr, daß unsere Konferenzen verflachen. Es ist daher am Platze, daß bei einem *Pastors' Institute* darauf aufmerksam gemacht wird.

Apost. 20 haben wir ein kurzes Protokoll einer Pastoralkonferenz, von Gott dem Heiligen Geiste selbst verabsaßt. Der Vorsitz war der große Apostel Paulus. Dieser hatte ein Programm ausgearbeitet und leitete die Besprechung. Er wird die einzelnen Punkte weiter ausgeführt haben. Auch ist es selbstverständlich, daß die Pastoren allerlei Fragen an den Apostel richteten. Paulus befand sich auf der Reise von Korinth nach Jerusalem. Er reiste nicht allein, sondern in seiner Begleitung befanden sich neun Gehilfen. Als sie nach Milet gekommen waren, rief Paulus die Ältesten von Ephesus zu sich. Ephesus war dreißig Meilen von Milet entfernt und mit Milet durch eine gute Straße verbunden. Ephesus war eine volkreiche Stadt. Dort hatte der Apostel drei Jahre mit großem Erfolg gearbeitet. Es waren daher in der Stadt viele Christen, die von einer Anzahl Pastoren bedient wurden. Paulus und seine Begleiter nebst diesen Ältesten bildeten eine ansehnliche Pastoralkonferenz.

Man kann die Verhandlungen in fünf Abschnitte einteilen. 1. B. 18—21. Pauli Amtsführung in Ephesus. 2. B. 22—27. Paulus zeigt den Ältesten an, daß seine Arbeit unter ihnen zum Abschluß gekommen sei, daß er ihnen den ganzen Rat Gottes zur Seligkeit verkündet habe und daher frei sei von aller Blut. 3. B. 28—31. Hier redet Paulus von der Einsetzung des Predigamt und dessen Verrichtungen, Weiden und Wachen. 4. B. 32—35 befiehlt er die Pastoren dem Schutze Gottes und ermahnt sie zum vorsichtigen Wandel. 5. B. 36—38. Er vereint sich mit ihnen zum Gebet.

1. B. 18—21: „Als aber die zu ihm kamen, sprach er zu ihnen: Ihr wiisset von dem ersten Tage an, da ich bin in Asien kommen, wie ich allezeit bin bei euch gewesen und dem Herrn gedienet mit aller Demut und mit viel Tränen und Anfechtungen, die mir sind widerfahren von den Juden, so mir nachstellten; wie ich nichts verhalten habe, das da nützlich ist, daß ich euch nicht verkündiget hätte und euch gelehret öffentlich und sonderlich. Und habe bezeuget beide den Juden und Griechen die Buße zu Gott und den Glauben an unsern Herrn Jesus Christum.“

Hier gibt Paulus Bericht über seine Amtsführung in Ephesus. Er stellt sich den versammelten Ältesten als Vorbild dar. Er hat sein Amt mit Demut verwaltet. Trotzdem er ein großer Apostel war, reich

begabt und viel Arbeit verrichtet hatte, war er nicht hoffärtig und hochmütig, sondern bescheiden und demütig. Gerade Pastoren sind wegen ihrer Stellung in Gefahr, die Demut zu vergessen. Auch ließ Paulus sich nicht in seiner Tätigkeit beeinflussen durch die Verfolgungen seitens der Juden. Wievohl ihm diese viele Tränen und Anfechtungen verursachten, so blieb er doch auf seinem Posten. Paulus bezeugt nun, worin seine eigentliche Arbeit als Prediger bestanden habe. Das Thema war Buße zu Gott und Glaube an unsern Herrn Jesum Christum, Sünde und Gnade. Er hatte fort und fort gezeigt, daß die Menschen von Natur Sünder sind und deswegen unter dem Fluche Gottes stehen und daß ihre einzige Rettung die Vergebung durch Jesum Christum ist. Dies hatte er Juden und Griechen gepredigt. Seine Predigt bei Juden hat nicht anders gelautet als bei Griechen. So verschieden diese Völker sonst waren, in bezug auf den Weg zur Seligkeit war kein Unterschied. Auch begnügte sich Paulus nicht mit der öffentlichen Predigt; nein, auch sonderlich, im Verkehr mit den Einzelnen, *κατ' οἰκους*, hatte er Jesum verkündigt.

Es ist wichtig, daß auf Pastoral Konferenzen immer und immer wieder betont wird, daß die eigentliche Aufgabe eines Predigers darin besteht, Buße und Glauben zu predigen. Diese Predigt muß seinem Amte das Gepräge geben. Gewiß, die Art und Weise der Predigt wird sich nach den Zuhörern und den Umständen richten. Man wird anders vor jungen als vor alten Leuten, vor Amerikanern als vor Chinesen predigen, aber nie darf das eigentliche Thema, Buße und Glaube, vergessen werden. Gerade auf Konferenzen müssen wir einander darauf aufmerksam machen, daß wir es nicht Sektenpredigern nachmachen, die allerlei Dinge auf den Kanzeln verhandeln, nur nicht Buße und Glauben. Auch darf ein Pastor nicht meinen, daß wenn er den Chorrock abgelegt hat, er aufhöre, amtlich tätig zu sein. Sein ganzer Verkehr mit seinen Pfarrkindern muß dem großen Zwecke dienen, der Verkündigung von Buße und Glauben.

2. B. 22—27: „Und nun siehe, ich, im Geist gebunden, fahre hin nach Jerusalem, weiß nicht, was mir daselbst begegnen wird, ohne daß der Heilige Geist in allen Städten bezeuget und spricht: Vande und Trübsal warten mein daselbst. Aber ich achte der keines; ich halte mein Leben auch nicht selbst teuer, auf daß ich vollende meinen Lauf mit Freuden und das Amt, das ich empfangen habe von dem Herrn Jesu, zu bezeugen das Evangelium von der Gnade Gottes. Und nun siehe, ich weiß, daß ihr mein Angesicht nicht mehr sehen werdet, alle die, durch welche ich gegangen bin und geprediget habe das Reich Gottes. Darum zeuge ich euch an diesem heutigen Tage, daß ich rein bin von aller Blut; denn ich habe euch nichts verhalten, daß ich nicht verkündigt hätte alle den Rat Gottes.“

Paulus eröffnete hier den Ältesten zu Ephesus, daß Vande und Trübsal seiner zu Jerusalem warteten. Das war beschlossen von Gott

und durch den Heiligen Geist geoffenbart. Paulus ist nicht kreuzesförmig, versucht nicht, der Trübsal aus dem Wege zu gehen, sondern ist willig, sie auf sich zu nehmen. Ja, sie raubt ihm nicht seine Freudigkeit im Amt. Wenn es Gottes Wille ist, daß seine Tätigkeit zum Abschluß kommt, während er noch in der Blüte der Jahre steht, so ist er es zufrieden. Sein Amt war ein herrliches. Er hatte es von dem Herrn Jesu empfangen, und es bestand darin, daß er das Reich Gottes predigte. Er nennt sein Leben einen Lauf, *δρόμος*. Das zeigt an, daß er beständig tätig war, fleißig wirkte und arbeitete und dabei stets das herrliche Ziel, der Seelen Seligkeit, vor Augen hatte.

Wir Pastoren sind zuzeiten niedergeschlagen. Wenn wir in Not und Trübsal stehen, wenn uns in unserm Amte Widerwärtigkeiten zustoßen, oder wenn wir meinen, infolge von Krankheit und körperlicher Gebrechlichkeit bald gezwungen zu werden, das Amt niederzulegen, so will uns das die Freudigkeit in unserm Beruf nehmen, uns müde und verzagt machen. Da werden wir gerade auf unsern Konferenzen erquickt, wenn wir hören, daß gleiche Leiden über unsere Brüder gehen, und wenn uns in Referaten und Aussprachen die Herrlichkeit unseres Berufes gezeigt wird. Die Väter unserer Synode rühmten immer wieder, wie segensreich für sie in ihrer Einsamkeit und in den neuen Verhältnissen die Konferenzen gewesen seien.

Der Apostel war auf dieser Konferenz sehr bewegt. Er wußte nicht, was ihm in Jerusalem begegnen würde, nur daß Bande und Trübsal seiner warteten. So bezeugt er ihnen, daß er rein sei von aller Blut, denn er habe ihnen den ganzen Rat Gottes verkündet. In Ephesus hatte er drei Jahre gewirkt. Wie reich er die Gemeinde in der Erkenntnis gefördert hatte, zeigt sein Brief an die Epheser. Ein Prediger, zumal wenn er längere Zeit an einer Gemeinde steht, darf sich nicht damit begnügen, daß er nur die Hauptlehren der Schrift predigt, sondern er muß sich bemühen, seine Glieder in allen Lehren zu unterrichten, und zu dem Zweck fleißig studieren, mit jung und alt den Katechismus treiben und auch ein regelmäßiger Konferenzbesucher sein. Wenn er von seiner Gemeinde Abschied nimmt, muß er mit Paulus sprechen können: Ich bin rein von aller Blut, denn ich habe euch alle den Rat Gottes verkündet.

3. B. 28—31: „So habt nun acht auf euch selbst und auf die ganze Herde, unter welche euch der Heilige Geist geseket hat zu Bischöfen, zu weiden die Gemeinde Gottes, welche er durch sein eigen Blut erworben hat. Denn das weiß ich, daß nach meinem Abschied werden unter euch kommen greuliche Wölfe, die der Herde nicht verschonen werden. Auch aus euch selbst werden aufstehen Männer, die da verkehrte Lehren reden, die Jünger an sich zu ziehen. Darum seid wader und denket daran, daß ich nicht abgelassen habe drei Jahre, Tag und Nacht einen jeglichen mit Tränen zu vermahren.“

Dieser Abschnitt ist der wichtigste Teil. Er enthält eine klassische

Stelle vom Predigtamt und besagt kurz alles, was darüber zu sagen ist. Paulus sagt hier den Pastoren, daß sie vom Heiligen Geist gesetzt sind. Ihr Amt ist also nicht menschlich, sondern göttlich. Sie waren nicht direkt, unmittelbar, berufen wie der Apostel, sondern mittelbar, durch die Gemeinden, aber gleichfalls vom Heiligen Geist berufen. In bezug auf die Gültigkeit eines Berufes ist also kein Unterschied, ob dieser mittelbar oder unmittelbar erfolgt ist. Paulus belehrt weiter die Ältesten, daß sie über die Gemeinde Gottes gesetzt sind. Damit zeigt er, welch hohe und vornehme Versammlung eine Gemeinde ist. Sie gehört Gott an, und zwar deswegen, weil er sie mit seinem Blut erworben hat. Paulus redet hier von Christo, der zweiten Person in der Gottheit, und nennt Jesu Blut Gottes Blut. Der Apostel sagt den Ältesten weiter, wozu der Heilige Geist sie gesetzt habe, zu Bischöfen, zu Aufsehern, ἐκονόμοις, und zwar über die ganze Herde. Jeder Pastor hat demnach die volle Verantwortung für seine Gemeinde. Der Apostel schärft den Pastoren weiter ein, daß sie zunächst auf sich selbst acht haben müssen, um achthaben zu können auf die ganze Herde. Ein Pastor, der nicht beständig über sich wacht, seine eigene Seligkeit nicht schafft mit Furcht und Zittern, wird kein treuer Bischof sein.

Die Funktionen des Bischofsamts sind nun doppelter Natur, weiden und beschützen, lehren und wehren. Paulus sagt den Ältesten, sie seien gesetzt, zu weiden die Gemeinde Gottes. Das Wort weiden zeigt an, daß der Bischof ein Hirte sein soll, und zwar ein guter Hirte. Gott klagt oft im Alten Testament über die bösen Hirten, die die Herde nicht versorgen, und unser Heiland sagte von dem Volk: Sie sind wie die Schafe, die keinen Hirten haben. Heutzutage steht es leider auch so, daß viele Gemeinden keine wirklichen Hirten haben. Ein guter Hirte muß dafür sorgen, daß die Schafe grüne Weide und frisches Wasser haben, also gesunde und reichliche Nahrung. So ist es die Pflicht der Prediger, dafür zu sorgen, daß die ganze Gemeinde und jeder einzelne in der Gemeinde mit passender und genügender Nahrung versorgt wird. Da nun Gottes Wort die einzige Nahrung ist, so wird ein treuer Pastor sich hüten, seinen Schafen etwas anderes zu bringen als Gottes Wort, und fleißig und beständig einem jeden seine Gebühr geben. Um das tun zu können, wird er auf der einen Seite ernstlich Gottes Wort studieren, und auf der andern Seite sich bemühen, die Bedürfnisse der einzelnen Glieder kennenzulernen.

Paulus eröffnet nun den Pastoren, daß in nicht ferner Zeit ihre Herde werde beunruhigt werden von falschen Lehrern, die teils von außen an die Gemeinde herantreten, teils aus ihrer eigenen Mitte aufstehen werden. Er beschreibt diese Lehrer als greuliche Wölfe, die die Schafe zerreißen, und als Männer, die die Christen von Christo an sich ziehen. Und nun ermahnt er sie ernstlich, sie sollten wader sein und acht darauf haben und die Augen offen halten, und betont wieder, daß er unter ihnen treu gearbeitet habe; er habe drei Jahre lang Tag und

Nacht einen jeglichen mit Tränen ermahnt. Christliche Gemeinden werden allezeit von außen und von innen beunruhigt, und wenn die Hirten nicht wachen, so finden die falschen Lehrer Eingang und zerstören die Kirche. Unsere Zeit ist voll falscher Propheten, die auf alle mögliche Weise unsere Gemeinden bedrohen, so durch Literatur und Radio. Da ist es nun auch gerade Aufgabe der Pastoral Konferenzen, daß die Pastoren sich gegenseitig auf diese falschen Lehren aufmerksam machen und sich zum Kampf gegen diese rüsten, auch unter sich selbst Lehrwache und Lehrzucht üben, um zu verhüten, daß in ihrer eigenen Mitte Männer mit verkehrten Lehren auftreten. War solches Wachen schon in der apostolischen Zeit nötig, wieviel mehr in der letzten, bestrübten Zeit!

4. B. 32—35: „Und nun, liebe Brüder, ich befehle euch Gott und dem Wort seiner Gnade, der da mächtig ist, euch zu erbauen und zu geben das Erbe unter allen, die geheiligt werden. Ich habe euer keines Silber noch Gold noch Kleid begehrt. Denn ihr wisst selber, daß mir diese meine Hände zu meiner Notdurft und derer, die mit mir gewesen sind, gedienet haben. Ich habe es euch alles gezeigt, daß man also arbeiten müsse und die Schwachen aufnehmen und gedenken an das Wort des Herrn Jesu, das er gesagt hat: Geben ist seliger denn Nehmen.“

Der Apostel hatte den versammelten Pastoren mit großer Klarheit und heiligem Ernst die Pflichten und die Verantwortung ihres Hirtenamtes vorgeführt. Nun schließt er, indem er ihnen zeigt, woher sie Kraft nehmen können, es auszuführen, nicht aus sich selbst, nicht aus eigenem Vermögen, sondern allein aus Gott, der mächtig ist, sie zu erbauen, τὸ δοῦναι ἐκποδοῦναι, so daß sie treu bleiben bis ans Ende und mit allen Kindern Gottes das ewige Leben ererben. Gott wirkt dies nicht ohne Mittel, sondern durch das Wort der Gnade. Darum ist es gerade den Predigern nötig, dieses Wort fleißig zu gebrauchen und dadurch beständig sich zu stärken.

Schließlich macht Paulus die Ältesten noch darauf aufmerksam, daß er auch in Ephesus keinen Gehalt genommen, sondern sich und die Seinen durch seine Hände ernährt habe, ja, auch noch imstande gewesen sei, den Armen mitzuteilen nach dem Wort des Herrn „Geben ist seliger denn Nehmen“. Wenn Gott nun auch nicht erwartet, daß die Pastoren wie Paulus keinen Gehalt ziehen, sondern die Regel ist, daß die Gemeinde sie ernährt, so lernen wir doch von Paulus, daß die Pastoren nicht um schnöden Gewinnes willen arbeiten und daß sie gerne geben und mildtätig sein sollen.

5. B. 36—38: „Und als er solches gesagt, kniete er nieder und betete mit ihnen allen. Es ward aber viel Weinens unter ihnen allen und fielen Paulo um den Hals und küßten ihn, am allermeisten betrübt über dem Wort, das er sagte, sie würden sein Angesicht nicht mehr sehen; und geleiteten ihn in das Schiff.“ Der Apostel schließt die

Konferenz mit einem brünstigen Gebet. Er wird gebetet haben für die Pastoren und ihre Gemeinden, für sich und für die ganze Kirche. Zu einer rechten Konferenz gehört demnach auch das gemeinsame Gebet. Wir eröffnen und schließen unsere Sitzungen mit Gebet und halten auch Konferenzgottesdienste ab. Die Pastoren sollten es sich daher zur Pflicht machen, bei der Eröffnung der Sitzungen zugegen zu sein und nicht zu spät zu kommen, auch die Konferenz nicht ohne Not vor Schluß verlassen.

Überblicken wir die Konferenz zu Milet, so erkennen wir, daß Paulus nur große Dinge zur Verhandlung vorlegte, Dinge, die die Führung des Predigtamts betrafen, so daß die Pastoren erbaut und gestärkt nach Ephesus zurückkehrten. Machen wir nach dem Vorbild der Konferenz zu Milet unsere Konferenzen immer segensreicher und fruchtbringender, indem wir sie fleißig besuchen und auf ihnen nicht zu viel Zeit verwenden auf geringfügige Dinge, sondern uns konzentrieren auf die großen Hauptfachen. J. Pfotenhauer

The False Arguments for the Modern Theory of Open Questions

A Translation of Dr. C. F. W. Walther's Article "Die falschen Stuetzen der modernen Theorie von den offenen Fragen",

Lehre und Wehre, XIV (1868)

(Continued)

Johann Gerhard, whose authority is adduced against us, is of the same well-founded opinion [that, while in this life not a higher unity than a fundamental one is possible, errors that arise in a church-body should not be treated with indifference, even if they are of a non-fundamental character]. He writes against the papists, who place unity among the marks of the Church: "It must be added that unity of faith and doctrine in the Church is not a perfect and absolute one in this life; for at times controversies occur between members of the true Church through which this holy unity is torn. We therefore have to distinguish between that absolute, perfect unity, free from every form of disharmony, which is found nowhere except in the Church Triumphant, and that fundamental unity, which consists in agreement concerning the principal articles of doctrine, while with respect to a few less important points of faith (*fidei capitibus*) or to ceremonies which are a matter of indifference or to the interpretation of some Scripture-passages controversies will arise. And this is the unity obtaining in the Church Militant; for in this Church there is never found such a definite harmony that no disagreements arise in it. 'For we know in part, and we prophesy in part,' 1 Cor. 13:9."

Having next quoted a beautiful passage from the works of Augustine, Gerhard continues thus: "Here Augustine discloses the cause of disagreements in the Church. The truly pious are not yet perfectly renewed but retain remnants of the flesh. Hence they do not arrive at an accurate and perfect knowledge of the mysteries of faith but err and waver with respect to some of them. The flesh in the regenerate still strives against the spirit, for which reason it can easily happen, especially if the temptation of the devil also enters, that, giving way to wrong, carnal ideas, they create dissensions in the Church; however, if they do not become guilty of stubbornness and if the foundation is not shaken, they are not at once cut off from the body of the Church on this account. This is proved by the examples given in Acts 11:2; Gal. 2:11; Acts 15:39. In the Corinthian church divisions had arisen, profanations of the Eucharist had crept in, there were acrimonious debates about adiaphora, some persons doubted the article of the resurrection, etc.; in spite of all this, however, Paul does not refuse to call the assembly a church, but in addressing it, he terms it still a church of God, 1 Cor. 1:2. In the church of the Galatians the article of justification had been corrupted through the adulterations of false apostles; but since the members were still open to instruction and some of them still retained the true faith, Paul still calls the Galatian congregations, churches, Gal. 1:2. This is acknowledged even by Bellarmine." Having finally adduced several instances of dissension in the ancient Church, Gerhard concludes: "Hence it is certain that a total and real absolute unity cannot be hoped for in this life. And therefore not every disagreement at once dissolves union and unity in the Church." (*Loc. de Eccles.*, § 231.) It is clear that Gerhard in this passage does not intend to call those non-fundamental teachings which are clearly revealed in the Word of God open questions; he merely wishes to show that on account of doctrinal differences which arise in such points the essential unity of the Church is not at once destroyed, and the body is thereby not at once deprived of its status as a Church, and those individual members who in such points through their false teaching "dissolve unity" must not "at once be cut off," "unless stubbornness enters in and the foundation is shaken." How little Gerhard is of the opinion that those errors on account of which real unity in a Church is not at once nullified must be regarded as open questions we see from the fact that in his enumeration he includes even fundamental errors. His position is that all erring members must be tolerated as long as they are not stubborn and, though clinging to an error, are willing to remain on the proper foundation. That also is the only thing which we maintain, namely, that the time for separating from brethren on account of an error

which doctrinally is non-fundamental has only then arrived when those who are erring stubbornly reject all instruction from the divine Word and thus become manifest as people who, though they apparently do not wish to violate the dogmatic foundation, the analogy of faith, nevertheless shake and subvert the organic foundation, Holy Scripture itself, as far as they are concerned. It is something altogether unheard of to say that everything which does not belong to the fundamental articles must be put into the category of open questions. It may well happen that a simple-minded Christian will oppose some important secondary fundamental article and nevertheless possess true saving faith in his heart, while he who knowingly, contrary to Holy Scripture and the Confessions, would deny merely that the suffering of Christ took place *under Pontius Pilate* (a historical detail which certainly does not belong to the fundamental articles) would surely not be a true believer. Through nothing does an erring person manifest more clearly that his error is of a fundamental nature than by showing that in his error he rejects the Word of God, a thing which may take place in opposing non-fundamental as well as fundamental Bible-teachings; in fact, the fashion in which he handles mere problems may bring this to light. Accordingly, to name but one author, the Wittenberg theologian Carl Gottlob Hofmann (died 1774) writes: "Non-fundamental articles" (in which class he with Baier enumerates also the so-called theological problems) "often can assume the nature of fundamental articles if the reason on account of which they are unknown or denied is something that opposes the foundation of faith. For instance, the article of the propagation of the soul is not a fundamental article whether you maintain that it occurs *per traducem* or through a new creation; but if you hold that this propagation takes place *per traducem* in order to demonstrate that spirits are material beings, then you may become guilty of a fundamental error; for according to such a view the angels and God Himself are classed among beings that are corporeal. The article pertaining to the Copernican system likewise is not a fundamental one, but it can easily happen that a person denying the movement of the sun around the earth adds as his conclusion that the writers of the Old Testament were altogether uncultured and ignorant people (*admodum rudes*). In this way the infallibility of the holy writers and thereby the teaching of the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture are attacked." (*Theol. Thet. Praecogn.*, c. 11., § 26, p. 112.)

We are far removed from the position which severs fraternal relations with an individual and stops having church-fellowship with a church-body if in their understanding of Bible-teaching they are not dogmatically correct. We by no means consider such

correctness a condition of fellowship. If that were our position, we should have to contend against ourselves; for while we notice incorrect views, that is, errors, in others, other people may notice such imperfections in one or the other of us. No; as soon as an individual or a whole church-body manifests the attitude of willingness to submit unconditionally to the whole Word of God and not to teach anything that opposes the foundation of Christian faith, be it the real or the dogmatic or the organic foundation, we extend in every case with joy the hand of fellowship to such an individual, and we are altogether willing and ready to cultivate church-fellowship with such an organization. This, however, is our position and practise, not because we consider any teaching clearly revealed in the Word of God an open question which one may either affirm or deny and concerning which there is liberty of opinion, but because we know that there are errors which proceed from weakness, just as there are sins that are caused by weakness, and that a Christian may intellectually err even with respect to a fundamental matter without subverting the foundation in his heart, not to mention how wrong it would be to assume that a person necessarily destroys the foundation of faith if he errs in a non-fundamental point. Nevertheless we consider it our duty to criticize, refute, oppose, contend against, and reprove whatever error becomes manifest in the teaching of those who wish to be our brethren, whether this error pertains to a fundamental or a non-fundamental teaching of the Word of God. By taking this course, we merely follow all faithful servants of God, from the prophets and apostles down to the most recent recognized faithful ministers of our Church. The result, of course, is that the Church never for a long time enjoys peace and that precisely the orthodox Church usually presents the appearance of a body torn by internal dissensions. But this, far from being an indictment of a servant of God and of the Church, is rather an indication and seal that the servant of God is faithful, and it gives the Church the assurance that it belongs to the *ecclesia militans*. For this reason Gerhard writes: "From the zealous warfare which pious and faithful teachers conduct against false doctrine one may not unjustly conclude that they are instruments of the Holy Spirit and that their teaching undoubtedly is true. It is an attribute of faithful teachers that they endeavor to purge the Church completely of all creations of Satan regardless of who the persons may be that have introduced or are introducing them. Therefore, even when very insignificant adulterations occur and they observe them, they will not for one hour close their eyes indulgently (*connivent*). When there is bright light, you see even little specks of dust; if there is darkness, the largest stumps obstructing your path are not noticed." (*Loc. Th., De Eccles., § 247.*)

Now, what is to be done if a person teaches an error which indeed is non-fundamental but opposes a clear Word of God and if he has been convicted by the clear word so that he is not able to reply? What is to be done if such an erring person stubbornly insists on maintaining his error, refuses to be instructed, and it becomes evident that he clings to his error not through weakness of intellect, but because he is unwilling to yield to the Word of God? What is to be done if he by clinging to his error does indeed not subvert the real or dogmatic but the organic foundation of faith, the authority of Holy Scripture? Are we, after he has been made conscious of his error and all admonitions have been in vain, to drop the controversy and tolerate the error? Are we to bring about peace in this manner, that we declare the point in debate an open question because it does not pertain to a fundamental article of faith? What human being, what angel, has the right to excuse us from obedience to the Word of God? Who can destroy and dissolve the Word of God even in one small tittle? Is not the only one who does that the Antichrist, the man of sin and son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God? And, we repeat, can there be a clearer proof that a body is not a true Church of God than if it will not unconditionally submit to the divine Word? Can it in this case, in true faith, hold the other teachings which it claims to accept and believe? Never! Whoever demands that a matter taught clearly in the Holy Scriptures be made an open question for him believes nothing on account of its being in the Word of God; otherwise he would believe and accept everything. Luther therefore is right when he says: "The Church, as St. Paul says, is subject and obedient to Christ, in fear and esteem. How could a person distinguish between the true Church of Christ and the church of the devil except through obedience and disobedience toward Christ, especially if disobedience, although people have become conscious of it and know it, excuses itself flagrantly and impudently and insists on being right? The holy Church, it is true, sins and stumbles or errs, as the Lord's Prayer teaches, but it does not defend or excuse its error; on the contrary, it humbly asks for forgiveness and makes amends wherever it can. Its sin then is forgiven and no longer placed to its account. If I cannot distinguish the true from the false Church through obedience, on the one hand, and stubborn disobedience, on the other, I no longer can have any opinion about the character of a Church." (Luther pertaining to his *Buch von der Winkelmesse*, 1534; XIX, 1579.)

Luther writes furthermore: "Here you see what St. Paul thinks

of a little error in doctrine which apparently is insignificant, or even seems to represent the truth. He considers it so grave and dangerous that he is justified in denouncing its sponsors as false prophets, even though they appear to be eminent people. Therefore it is not right for us to consider the leaven of false teaching a little matter. Let it be as little as it pleases; if it is not watched, it will result in the collapse of truth and salvation and in the denial of God. For if the Word is adulterated and God denied and blasphemed (a result which will necessarily follow), all hope of salvation is gone. But whether or not we are blasphemed, denounced, and killed is not of any moment; for He is still living who can again raise and rescue us from the curse, death, and hell. For this reason we should learn to accord great and high esteem to the majesty and glory of the Word; for it is not such a small and light matter as the false enthusiasts of our day imagine, but one single tittle of it is greater and of more weight than heaven and earth. Hence we in this instance do not concern ourselves with Christian unity or love, but we straightway express our judgment, that is, we condemn and denounce all those who even in the smallest particle adulterate and change the majesty of the Word; for 'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' (Comments on Gal. 5:12, VIII, 2669 f.) A little above this passage Luther had written, "Christian doctrine does not belong to us, but to God, who has made us merely its servants and ministers; hence we cannot drop or yield the smallest tittle or letter of it." (Comments on Gal. 5:9.)

On the other hand, that a point can become divisive only after the respective error has in vain been proved from the Holy Scriptures, after all repeated admonitions have been without fruit, and after it has become evident that the erring person is inwardly convinced of his error and that he therefore consciously contends against the foundation of faith, either the real or dogmatic or merely the organic foundation, Luther states emphatically in the well-known passage: "Augustine says with respect to himself: *Errare potero, haereticus non ero*; that is, I can err, but I do not want to become a heretic. The reason is this: Heretics not only err, but they refuse to be instructed; they defend their error as right and contend against the truth which they have come to know and against their own conscience. Of such people Paul says, Titus 3:10, 11: 'A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth,' being *autocatacritos*, that is, he deliberately and finally chooses to remain in the condemnation resulting from his error. But St. Augustine will gladly confess his error and accept instruction. Hence he cannot become a heretic even if he should err.

All other saints take the same course and willingly throw their hay, stubble, and wood into the fire in order that they may remain on the saving foundation. This very thing we also have done and are still doing." (*Concerning Councils and Churches*, A. D. 1539, XVI, 2663 f.) As long therefore as the erring person has not been convicted of subverting the organic foundation through his error, and as long as he has not become stubborn in his attitude, no error constitutes him a heretic. The same thing applies to a whole church-body. Yes, should the error pertain to less principal points clearly revealed in the Scriptures but of a non-fundamental character, then even a stubborn clinging to such points does not make a teacher a heretic but merely a schismatic, and his association does not get to be a sect, but a schismatic body. Accordingly in our Church, Flacius, who stubbornly defended the erroneous teaching that sin belongs to a man's essence, and Huber, who stubbornly taught that predestination is universal, did not become heretics but schismatics, whom orthodox churches could not admit to their pulpits, and if these men had founded church-bodies embodying the errors of their leaders in their doctrinal platform, these bodies, *caeteris paribus*, would not have been sects but schismatic associations. For this reason Quenstedt writes: "There are, furthermore, less principal articles of faith which Holy Scripture teaches us to believe but whose rejection does not necessarily involve loss of salvation. The denial of these articles does not by itself but merely through a more remote inference oppose a fundamental article of faith and destroy it. Such a denial makes a person a schismatic, for instance, the rejection of the teaching that sin does not belong to man's essence, that predestination is not universal, etc." (*Theol. Didactico-polem.*, I, 355.) Calov also, to mention one more instance, willingly admits with Gerhard that, for example, "the accusation of heresy must not be raised on account of a dissension in the question pertaining to the baptism of John, since in our time this question has nothing to do with salvation." But he at once adds: "By no means is it permitted to believe and argue for or against a matter where the Holy Spirit has given us a decision," which Calov held to be the case in this instance. (*Syst.*, I, 953.)

The following sections of this article are intended to show that the advocates of the modern theory of open questions try to support it by advancing the view that everything must belong to the category of open questions which has not been decided in the Symbolical Books or in which even recognized orthodox teachers have erred, or, finally, whatever, though contained in the Scriptures, has not been clearly revealed there.

A.

(To be continued)

The Saxons Move to Perry County

A. The Reasons for Leaving St. Louis

When the Saxon Lutherans reached the metropolis of the central Mississippi Valley, then a town of some 16,000 inhabitants, their plans had not yet fully matured. Only one point seems to have been reasonably certain, namely, that they did not intend to remain in St. Louis. In the *Regulations for the Emigrants*, approved in Dresden on May 17, 1838, paragraph 4 reads:

"*Place of Settlement.* — The place of colonization in the United States of North America is to be chosen in one of the Western States in Missouri or Illinois or perhaps in Indiana."

And Paragraph 6 of the same document speaks of the

"*Purchase of Land.* — From St. Louis a commission of all the emigrants is to be elected for the purchase of a parcel of contiguous land. After what is necessary of this land for church, school, and community has been reserved, the remainder shall be parceled out to each settler according to his needs. These lands collectively shall be the village or town which is to be founded.

"Outside of the community each one may buy as much land as he desires."*

On the basis of these paragraphs it is clear, therefore, that the leaders of the emigrants had not contemplated remaining in the city of St. Louis.

But there were other factors which gave further impetus to the idea of establishing the settlement of the immigrant Lutherans elsewhere. For one thing, the hostility of the Germans of St. Louis, many of whom represented a radical element in religion, was apparent almost from the beginning. As early as January 26, 1839, the German weekly *Anzeiger des Westens* carried the following editorial: "We must notify our readers of the arrival of the first two shipments (*Sendungen*) of the Stephanians—a total of about 300 heads. Very aged men and such as had in their home country lived in good circumstances are among them, who had been led to take the unusual step of an emigration in such advanced years of their life and one which was still more dangerous, namely, that of paying in their entire property for the flighty project of a community settlement, only by the false pretenses of their parsons (*Pfaffen*) that they could not be saved if they should die in old Europe. As things now stand, both the spiritual and the temporal affairs of the congregation are lying, practically without control,

* The German text has: "Von St. Louis aus soll durch einen Ausschuss saemtlicher Auswandernden ein Strich zusammenhaengender Laendereien angekauft werden," and this might be more exactly rendered: "From St. Louis a commission of all emigrants is to purchase a strip of lands in one parcel."

in the hands of the ministry, who enjoy the unconditional authority and obedience on the part of their sect." (*Schicksale und Abenteuer*, 38 f.) When some fair-minded person wrote to the editor, remonstrating against such an unfriendly reception of fellow-countrymen, an editorial definitely put him in his place. Nor did the *Anzeiger des Westens* change its tactics in later editions, although the editorial staff tried to justify its position in attacking what the paper termed the "ministerial tyranny" (*Pfaffentum, pfaeffische Uebergewalt*) to which the Saxons were said to be subjected. It is more than likely that the unaccustomed surroundings in the new country and the excessive sensitiveness of the immigrants aggravated the tension produced by the hostility of the German radicals and that the latter did not hesitate to transmit their animosity to others. A report has it that Pastor E. M. Buerger, who had come up on the *Rienzi* and arrived at St. Louis on January 18, at the time of the arrival of the *Selma* (February 19), warned its passengers not to associate with the unscrupulous element in the city. As a result of this well-meant warning Dr. Vehse and one of the ministerial candidates were insulted and stoned on a public street, and the name "Stephanist" became a shameful epithet. (*Schicksale und Abenteuer*, 45 f.)

Another factor that made it imperative for the Saxons to find a home for their group as soon as possible was the relatively high cost of living. From a number of reports we glean that the following prices prevailed during the early months of the year 1839: 1 bushel of Indian corn, \$1.10; 1 bushel of wheat, 1½ dollar; 1 bu. of potatoes, \$1.00 to \$1.50; 1 bu. of apples, \$1.50 to \$2.00; pork, about 12 cents a pound; beef, about 10 cents; butter 33½ cents; soft coal 25 to 50 cents a bushel. Clothing was said to be of a poor grade and cheaply tailored. One can readily see that the food bill of the colonists must have been very large. (Guenther, p. 51.)

Since the *Regulations for the Emigrants* stipulated the election or appointment of a commission to purchase land for the proposed colony, this matter was attended to very soon. It was in full agreement with the plans of the leader, Pastor Stephan, that this commission should act as soon as possible. A German physician of the city by the name of Gempp, who was very much interested in the welfare of the immigrants, offered some advice, which was considered very valuable by men like Dr. Vehse, one of the lawyers of the party. When the *Olbers* had docked at New Orleans, on January 20, the balance in the treasury had still been approximately 30,000 Spanish dollars, but this sum had meanwhile been reduced considerably by the expenses of the voyage up the river and the rather extravagant demands of

Stephan. Through the mediation of Dr. Gempp the colonists received an offer of a fine piece of land, the so-called Gratiot tract, on the Meramec River, and only about twelve to fifteen miles from St. Louis. The property embraced 15,000 acres, and the terms of sale were most favorable, with payments arranged at a convenient time.

Stephan opposed the suggestion, since he did not care to remain in such close proximity to the big city. So the commission finally recommended the purchase of a tract of land in the southeastern part of Perry County (with possibly a small section in Cape County). This tract consisted of 4,472.66 acres and was bought for \$9,234.25, the transaction being in cash. The deal was closed on April 8, 1839. An additional \$1,000 was paid to a Mr. D. Sullivan for the landing-place on the river. So the immigrants were now definitely committed to the colony in Perry County.

B. The Trip Down the River

At this point it may be well once more to enumerate the men who were at the head of the undertaking. *Martin Stephan* was the originator of the plan to emigrate and the acknowledged head of the immigrants, who had, by a formal declaration on board of the *Olbers*, elected him bishop of the congregation, or at least of the colonists on the ship on which he was a passenger. During the trip up the Mississippi, which in the case of the *Selma* lasted from January 31 to February 19, his fellow-passengers had signed a declaration in which they pledged themselves to accept and uphold the episcopal form of church government and to submit themselves, not only in matters pertaining to the Word of God, but also in those concerning the external conduct of the colony, to the direction of their bishop, Pastor Stephan. He was, therefore, the acknowledged head of the colonists.

The other leaders may be briefly named and characterized. *G. H. Loeber*, formerly pastor at Eichenberg, in Saxe-Altenburg, was next to Martin Stephan the oldest pastor among the immigrants. He became pastor at Altenburg, where he died in 1849. He was respected for his learning and loved for his gentleness and tact. *E. G. W. Keyl* had been pastor at Niederfrohna in Saxony. When the colony was established in Perry County, he headed the congregation in Frohna, later becoming pastor in Baltimore. He was known for his administrative ability. *Otto Hermann Walther*, who made the trip down the river with the first group of immigrants, afterwards returned to St. Louis to become the pastor of the "Saxon" congregation, which, three years later, adopted the name "Trinity." He was the poet of the immigrants and a deeply spiritual nature. January 21, 1841, he died of "*Schleim- und Gal-*

lenfieher." (*Lutheraner*, 1938, 188.) C. F. W. Walther, who very shortly assumed the leadership of the colonists, had been pastor at Braeunsdorf in Saxony. In Perry County he became the pastor of the congregation at Dresden, where he remained until he was called as the successor of his brother in St. Louis. *Theodor Brohm* was private secretary of Stephan; he had no charge in Germany. He was one of the founders of the college and its chief instructor till 1843. *Ernst Moritz Buerger* had been pastor at Lunzenau, in Saxony. He held a pastorate in Perry County, namely, at Seelitz; he later became a charter member of the Missouri Synod and afterwards held pastorates in various cities in the East. Candidate *Ottomar Fuerbringer* was one of the founders of the Altenburg college. His longest pastorate was at Frankenmuth, Michigan. He was the profoundest thinker among the fathers of the Missouri Synod.

Among the leading laymen of the immigrants we find the two lawyers Doctor Vehse and Doctor Marbach, the merchant Fischer, also Gustav Jaekel (or Jaeckel), who, with Vehse and Fischer, was a member of the *Wirtschaftskommission*, a sort of executive board for the external affairs of the colony. Vehse writes (*Die Stephansche Auswanderung*, 36) that Doctor Gemppe, the physician, who had already established a practise in St. Louis, had been willing to come down to the colony, "Wittenberg," but had apparently reconsidered his intention. This man had left a very lucrative practise in Germany at a ducal court.

In order to complete our list of the leaders, we might at this point insert the names of three other men. *Carl Friedrich Gruber* had been pastor in Reust, in the duchy of Altenburg. He had been associated with the Stephanist movement even in Germany, but he did not cross the ocean with the other colonists. He came to Perry County with 141 persons, on December 13, 1839, and assumed the pastorate at Paitzdorf. *J. F. Buenger*, a candidate of theology, had likewise been associated with the Stephanist movement in Saxony. He had planned to make the ocean voyage with the group, as he had led a section down the Elbe River; but when his mother was placed under arrest in Bremen, under a charge which was later cleared up, he was detained beyond the time of departure. He came to America by way of New York, landing there on February 18, 1839. He arrived in Perry County on the day before Pentecost, May 18, 1839. (*Schieferdecker, Geschichte Altenburgs*, 9.) Buenger was most energetic in the building of the log-cabin college and in digging the well located some sixty feet south of the cabin site. He also taught in the institution from the time of its opening, on December 9, 1839, till he followed the call as parish-school teacher in the Saxon congregation in

St. Louis, where he was inducted into office on August 2, 1840. A few years later he became assistant pastor of Trinity and then pastor of Immanuel, founder of the Lutheran Hospital and of an orphanage. The third man to be mentioned in this connection is *J. J. Maximilian Oertel*. This man had been trained at the Barmer Missionshaus, had come to New York, and had there become the spiritual head of a small congregation of about 95 souls, who decided to join the Saxon colonists. He must have been in St. Louis as early as April 24, since his signature appears under a letter of protest in the *Anzeiger des Westens* of April 27, 1839. From various references it appears that Oertel came to Perry County with his people together with Candidate J. F. Buenger. This so-called "Berlin group" moved to Johannesburg, approximately three miles from Dresden, and belonged to that parish. Oertel returned to New York and became a member of the Roman Catholic Church. (Koesterling, 17.)

But let us hear more of the transfer of the colonists from St. Louis to Perry County. The deal for the land was closed, as we have seen, on April 8, 1839. Two days later, on April 10, Mr. Christian Bimpage, the agent, together with Mr. Thierry, a surveyor, and a few carpenters and laborers arrived at Wittenberg Landing. On the following day they began the surveying of the land purchased for the colony and the erection of the crude cabins which were to serve as temporary homes for the colonists. The carpenters in Perry County received one dollar a day and the laborers fifty cents a day, plus meals and lodging. Mrs. Johanna Regina Heiner, the wife of Carpenter Carl Johann Christian Heiner, had been engaged by the land commission to do the cooking for the working-men. During the seventy days she served in this capacity she received forty cents a day, plus room and board.

Much had to be done in a very short time, for Stephan was anxious to get settled in the colony. In the Perry County tract one part, which had already been cultivated, was known as the Martin Farm, after the name of the owner. This name was regarded by some of the colonists as a good omen, since Stephan's given name was Martin, and it was proposed to make this farm the provisional seat of the episcopal government of the colony. Meanwhile the thirtieth anniversary of Stephan's ordination was celebrated in St. Louis, on April 13, in the lodging-place of Doctor Vehse. On April 27 the *Anzeiger des Westens* printed a letter in which the "Saxon" pastors defended Stephan against accusations and suspicions which had again been voiced in Germany. The signers of this letter, the pastors G. H. Loeber, E. M. Buerger, J. J. Max. Oertel, E. G. W. Keyl, and C. F. W. Walther, appeal to all "impartial and truth-loving readers" of the paper not to believe

the reports which had been given publicity in the *Anzeiger des Westens* on the basis of attacks published in Germany, which the writers branded as "European lies."

On April 26 Pastor Stephan, who had in the mean time lived rather luxuriously in St. Louis, left the city on the steamer *United States*. As Doctor Vehse relates, the bishop made such exorbitant demands upon the captain of the vessel on this trip, especially in the matter of food, that this official raised his rates to the other colonists the next month to a point where they could not accede to his charges for passage and food. (*Die Stephansche Auswanderung*, 16.) Among the men who accompanied Stephan were Keyl, O. H. Walther, Brohm, and the leading laymen Marbach, Gube, Soertzel, Nitzschke, Otto, Kluegel, Mueller, Schlimpert. Before leaving St. Louis, Stephan had commissioned Mr. Bimpage to send a consignment of fine wines to the temporary bishop's dwelling in Perry County, an order which again made a considerable dent in the much depleted treasury.

When the party arrived in Perry County, Pastor Stephan moved into his provisional quarters, but immediately made arrangements for the building of an episcopal palace whose frontage was to be seventy feet. At this time the immigrants still retained their unbounded confidence in him, as we see from a declaration dated April 29, 1839, and appearing in the *Anzeiger des Westens* of May 4. It is an unequivocal defense of Pastor Stephan and of all the other pastors of the group. It was signed by 24 elected representatives of the "Old Lutheran Congregation," and the names Vehse and Marbach appear at the head, followed by other prominent laymen, such as Jaekel, Gube, Barthel, Pfau, Tirmenstein, Winter, Palisch, Kluegel, Schlimpert, and others.

Just a little over a month after Stephan and the first group of settlers had left for Perry County, two further groups of colonists, practically all those who intended to settle in Perry County, left St. Louis. The trip was made on two steamers, the *Prairie* and the *Toledo*. The first of these boats reached the mouth of the Obrazo, or the Brazeau Creek, at the Wittenberg Landing, at 4 A. M. on May 29, while the *Toledo* did not dock until 5 P. M. on the same day. (Vehse, 18, 19.) About 200 immigrants, including the children, had remained in St. Louis. All the others were now in Perry County and the "Berlin group," which had joined them, just across the boundary, at Johannesberg, in Cape Girardeau County. Vehse relates that he immediately procured a horse and inspected the entire tract of land, concerning which Stephan had remarked that "it was even more beautiful than Palestine." Arrangements for the preliminary care of the colonists had been made, but they were by no means adequate,

as we shall presently see. The immigrants made every effort to become accustomed to conditions in a country which they must really wrest from the wilderness.

And just at this time certain facts became known, which came to most of the colonists like a bolt out of the blue sky. Certain accusations were preferred against their leader, among them such as pertained to his luxurious, almost voluptuous form of living, with specific sins connected therewith, and his dictatorial conduct. At first the confessions of the persons concerned were kept secret, but it was impossible to hush the matter up for any length of time. Doctor Vehse relates that, when he and the secretary of Pastor Stephan were informed concerning the accusations, he was in favor of bringing the accused to St. Louis and deliver him to the courts. But a prominent official of the city, by the name of Lane, advised against such a step, since he feared mob violence. The former pastor was therefore, on May 30, confronted with the accusations against him by a delegation sent to his dwelling in Perry County. Doctor Bimpage acted as secretary of the meeting. On May 31 the former bishop of the immigrants was rowed across the Mississippi, a certain teacher Mueller of the "Berlin group" being in charge. Landing was made on the Illinois side near the Devil's Bake-oven, since a room had been rented for him in a near-by farmhouse. The officials of the immigrants published a formal declaration and explanation of the action against their former bishop. It was dated May 27 and appeared in the *Anzeiger des Westens* of June 1, 1839. The Declaration of Deposition was signed by Pastors Loeber, Keyl, Buerger, O. H. Walther, C. F. W. Walther, and Oertel, by the laymen Vehse, Gube, Schlimpert, Palisch, and Sproede, by Edward Thierry and J. F. Gruenhagen as witnesses, and by H. Bimpage as secretary of the meeting. The statement appearing in the newspaper of June 1 seems to have been delivered to the office of publication before the *Prairie* and *Toledo* left for Perry County (with C. F. W. Walther and Keyl present, and O. H. Walther and Oertel already in Perry County). Fortunately a few fairly reliable reports seem to indicate that Stephan later came to a full knowledge of his sins and turned to his Savior in true repentance.

C. Hardships and Trials

The defection and removal of the man in whom most of the colonists had placed almost unlimited confidence created an enormous amount of confusion in Perry County as well as in St. Louis. A strange terror took hold of the immigrants; they felt that they were without leadership. They were again and again reminded of the fact that their former leader, who had for

decades preached the full truth of the Gospel and had shown to many of them the way of salvation, had made himself unworthy of the sacred office. Despair took hold of the people. They began to reproach their pastors for the conditions into which they had been led and hinted that these men had made common cause with their former bishop. In spite of all explanations and efforts to quiet the minds of people the excitement grew until most of the colonists were in the very depths of spiritual gloom. Many of them were persuaded that the entire undertaking had been sinful. They had been led to believe that they were doing God a service, and now it appeared that they were nothing more than a rabble and could no longer claim the name of a Christian congregation. It was openly stated that the pastors had done wrong in leaving their congregations in Germany, and therefore all their ministerial acts were under suspicion.

Finally the discussion reached this stage, that people said, till now they were under the impression that the congregation of immigrants was a true church, and now everything seemed to be thrown overboard what they had been taught to believe. Where, then, was certainty and salvation to be found? They were as confused as sheep that have gone astray and no longer are able to take firm steps. The poison of hierarchical error had entered their soul. Some of the people refused to attend services or to accept the ministrations of the pastors, saying that these men had left the congregations to which they had been rightly called and therefore had no authority to preach here in America. And they, on their part, did not consider themselves authorized to call pastors, since the Word no longer had full power because the man who had been their leader had been removed. Even the pastors suffered the severest qualms of conscience, for they likewise were no longer sure whether they could perform the work of their ministry according to God's ordinance. It really seemed that Satan might succeed in disrupting the colony completely and in plunging all its members into destruction and perdition.

Naturally this spiritual confusion was reflected also in the other relationships of the members of the colony. For instance, a board of management, which had been appointed, or elected, immediately after the deposition of Stephan, resigned within three weeks, their resignation of June 22 declaring that the division of the land, with which they had been entrusted, was being hindered; that impractical ideas and visionary plans were taking the place of sound business sense; that a budget was still lacking although the treasury had now dwindled down to hardly more than 2,000 dollars, while the physical needs of the colonists required about 500 dollars every two weeks; and that other evils had not been

corrected. Thus doubt, distrust, suspicion, had crept into the hearts of the colonists, and they found themselves unable to shake off the resulting lethargy. The chairman of this board, Doctor Vehse, left Perry County at the beginning of July absolutely disgusted with the whole situation. He left St. Louis on December 16 and returned to Germany, taking the *Johann Georg* out of New Orleans. On the way over he wrote a short account of the immigration, which served as a preface to his *Public Protest* against what he termed the "false, medieval-papistical, and sectarian system of church government." The latter document of 112 pages is dated November 23, 1839, and is signed by Vehse, Fischer, and Jaekel. At the end of the book Vehse offers copies of some of the pertinent documents which played such an important role in the history of the Saxon colony. His entire book, which shows deep study and an earnest endeavor to understand the truth, is a conclusive bit of evidence for the spiritual confusion which had taken possession of the Saxon Lutherans.

To gain a complete understanding of the desperate plight of the colonists, it is necessary also to consider the physical hardships of the first year, specifically of the late spring and early summer. A report brought to St. Louis during the first week in June stated that more than half of the colonists were obliged to camp in the open, where they were exposed to the heavy rains of spring and the bites of insects, which caused fever, while their effects were being ruined by the moisture and the food was often unfit for human consumption. A week later the report was published that there was still no adequate shelter for the colonists, but that 150 men were living in a sort of barracks which offered no shelter either against wind or rain. An effort was being made to erect enough log cabins for all the colonists, but the plan had not yet been carried into effect because the necessary draft-animals were lacking. Only 80 acres of the colony tract were under cultivation, and their money was almost exhausted.

In the opinion of the German people of St. Louis these conditions called for action. Accordingly, they held a meeting on June 10, in which they by formal resolution declared their sympathy with the fate of the colonists and appointed a committee of seven men who were to offer the colonists assistance. This assistance seemed to be required by the apparent impractical attitude of the Saxon leaders, who planned to build a village at the confluence of the Brazeau and the Mississippi, with a market-place and rows of business houses along the river, with homes for the craftsmen on the side of the hills, and with schools and parsonages on the bluff. Meanwhile the majority of the approximately 500 people were living in tents, booths, and crude cabins. Food was

often rather scarce and was therefore rationed to the individual families, the staple kinds of food being rice and bacon.

A more hopeful note is found in letters written somewhat later in the year. From accounts given by Christiana Loeber we glean the following information, which she addressed to her brother Gottwert Friedemann:

"It is remarkable how God always helps us. Besides the fine weather that we enjoy, the Americans have a larger crop this year than they have had for quite a while; they say so themselves, with amazement. This prompts these people, who are mostly excellent men, to be helpful to us, supporting us with victuals and in other ways. Loads of apples and sacks of flour they donate to our people, and you may stay with them as long as you choose to gather supplies for the winter. I myself did this twice so far, but in return for the favor shown me I knitted and sewed for them. They appreciate this and repay one generously. They also like to employ the men and the young people of the Germans and even desire to marry them. But we ourselves have so many unmarried young men that not near enough girls are to be found in our congregations. . . .

"Oh, it is not hard at all to make a living here. I wish the sister of H. S. would get me one of those small spinning-machines, as they are not yet to be had here. Yarn is high, but cotton one can raise himself. I also had given to me a complete instruction for the culture of silkworms and the fabrication of silk. I should like to do this if only I had my own little house first. Mulberry-trees are so plentiful that they are used for manufacturing all kinds of woodenware. We ourselves have a churning-tub [of mulberry-wood] to take care of the milk of our two cows. Heinrich and Gotthilf have the two calves, and Martha, whose hair is bobbed, has a small dog. . . . We have thought with love and concern of all of your birthdays, and have celebrated especially yours, dear brother, in company with Rev. Walther, with a glass to your health. . . . Should other persons intend to emigrate, tell them there is much good land in this neighborhood and that twenty farmers who are living at one place a few miles from here will move to Illinois to join their church and to make room for our dear children." (*Ebenezer*, 17 f.)

We have a few words also from Mrs. C. F. W. Walther, the former Emilie Buenger. In her reminiscences she writes:

"I remember very well how we did our washing at the creek, how we cooked our meals in large kettles, and how we used to sing. Little by little we made our sheds comfortable and even began to visit one another. When the weather was good, the children had their school out of doors, using logs for benches. Services on Sundays were conducted in the open whenever the weather permitted."

D. The Saxon Settlements Established

We now come to the most cheerful and encouraging part of our discussion, for it is evident that by the late summer of the year 1839 the dark clouds of affliction were gradually being dis-

sipated and the sun of God's mercy was beginning to shine on the Saxon colony in Perry County. A letter dated September 30, by Pastor Gotthold Heinrich Loeber to his relatives in Germany, contains the following information on the congregations of the colony and on the circumstances in which the settlers found themselves at that time:

"We are now divided into *five congregations*, whose five ministers, however, form only one common ministerium. The elder Pastor Walther is in charge of the congregation which remained in St. Louis and is permitted to hold its services in the Episcopal church of that city. To this congregation belong chiefly tradesmen, who make a good living in the city and intend to lay some money by in order to acquire homes out here in the country with us. Many inhabitants of St. Louis come to our services there.

"In the congregation at *Dresden*, to which the Berlin group who live about one hour's distance away belong, the *younger Pastor Walther* is laboring. On the ground of this congregation at Dresden are several frame houses, built at the beginning, in one of which the three married pastors with their families live in rather close proximity, yet without being in one another's way. Pastor Walther lives together with Candidate Fuerbringer with the folks from Berlin who immigrated from New York.

"Opposite our house many families live together in a much larger, but also much airier frame house (here called a camp). These have not yet settled on their own tract of ground. In this camp we till now conduct our common services and also offer some scanty school instruction, until our college, which is not yet completed (that is, an institution of higher learning), also the church and school of the individual congregation is ready.

"Next to the congregation at Dresden is that of *Altenburg*, which has called me as shepherd of souls. This also includes the families from Plawena and Halle as well as several from Saxony, Dresden, Hannover, and New York. The location of our land is pleasant and healthy, but the soil is mixed and lacking in moisture. The better part of it has fallen to the lot of our dear Bernhard Schmidt, who for that reason is ready to share with others. Two farmhouses which were on the property and were purchased with the land will, at least for this year, have to be used for parsonages and teachers' dwellings, although a parsonage according to German custom, namely, a two-story house, is to be completed before winter, but may not become altogether dry. To this parsonage also sister Christelchen (Christiana Loeber) will move with us because as yet she could find no workmen for her own house, which is to be erected on her own property. My sister-in-law (Mrs. Brohm) is having a small house built on the boundary of Altenburg, near the college, since she has been requested to take over the board and care of the institution. But she, like all others who were without funds and had not paid into the general treasury, has received a parcel of land in the domain of our Altenburg congregation, which she incidentally or at a later date intends to use and also to build on it. Sixteen acres have been allotted to the church and school, among these the only piece of ground which has till now been brought under cultivation and fenced in.

"Next to my congregation is that of Pastor Keyl, namely, that of the people from *Niederfrohna*, which is still in the process of growth, but will, if God permits our good Gruber to land safely with his ship, in this very year receive a large increase in membership. We do not as yet know where the Altenburger people who are coming with him and will not join the relatives who are fully settled, will find a shelter; but there is no lack of space, although for the moment we are in need of good, healthy shelter.

"Toward the east from us, in the direction of the Mississippi River, the congregation *Seelitz* is located, where Pastor Buerger has been called. This congregation has the most fertile and well-watered bottom-land, but not the healthiest.

"Finally, there is also one of our groups at the *Landing-place Wittenberg*, a location which is very suitable, but for several circumstances is not being extensively used this year. Every Sunday services are held here, and school is conducted daily by Candidate Schieferdecker and a teacher.

"Even now every congregation has its judge and juror, in Altenburg Bernhard Schmidt and a certain Grother. The rebuilding of our homes has indeed been much delayed by the partial absence of money, by differences of opinion, and especially by sicknesses, so that the present cold September days have taken us by surprise. But the consequence has been that every one who can at all stir, is doing so with greater diligence; and since most of the houses, according to the American custom, are built of hewn logs which are piled up, while the small crevices between the logs are filled with clay, not so much time is consumed as in building a house in Europe.

"The sickness which has visited us, as it did all immigrants, is the cold fever [malaria?], which, however, in the case of most patients passes over without danger, but returns after a few weeks. I also have already had it two times and Henry three times; the other members of my family have not yet been stricken. One who does not get the fever is usually bothered by painful sores, which, however, soon go away. Where the fever was accompanied by a nervous condition, it was indeed associated with much pain, and some who had not taken the proper care of themselves have died with it. Our physician is the incipient Doctor Buenger, son of Mrs. Buenger, who also lives with us. I should like to remark that I personally after a few days of fever am very healthy and well and also have my subsistence. But I am obliged to run and work much. Some also of my Altenburgers have moved to neighboring farms, some even at some distance, for which reason the way to their homes is rather far. Unusual and unexpected problems and questions, which often are beyond my powers and gifts, must be solved, and in our congregation, which is accustomed to criticizing, the members know how to judge what belongs to an evangelical and true sermon; and still time and place is not suited to real study. An important but very gratifying piece of work for me was the preparation of sixteen adult members of the Reformed persuasion, whom I, on the fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, as the oldest of the ministers, in the presence of my brethren in office and of the entire congregation, had the pleasure of receiving as members of the Lutheran Church by confirmation, a celebration, which, according to my knowledge, the Lutheran

Church during the last centuries has not experienced. Also a few Catholics were among those who were received; but several were hindered by sickness in being received at this time.

"Therefore I beg you to be satisfied with the information given above. Have no fears for our sake with reference to Indians, wild animals, Mexican soldiers, etc., for these dangers have not touched us to date. May God help both us and you above all to fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. May He save and help you with us through Jesus Christ." (*Kinder- und Jugendblatt*, Vol. 64, 1936, p. 24 ff.)

Thus the colony was gradually established in circumstances which were favorable to both the temporal and, above all, the spiritual peace and development of the colonists. Churches were gradually erected as planned. The children of the colony were taught the fundamentals of the Christian faith and trained in many other useful branches of learning. Teacher J. F. Ferdinand Winter served as the teacher of the Altenburg congregation from May, 1839, to the year 1873. At Johannesberg Candidate Geyer taught school, at Frohna Magister Wege, till other arrangements were made. At Wittenberg the children were first taught by Candidate G. A. Schieferdecker and a teacher; then the school of the Altenburg congregation was used. In short, the Perry County colony came close to being what Walther considered an ideal group of congregations, with the church and the parish-school working together for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

P. E. KRETZMANN

Predigtentwürfe für die Evangelien der Thomafius-Perikopenreihe

Sonntag Cantate

Joh. 15, 1—11

Als Christus im Begriff stand, seinen Todesgang anzutreten, war er nicht um sich, wohl aber um seine Jünger besorgt. Er kannte die ihnen bevorstehende schwere Prüfungszeit. Darum tröstete er sie recht herzlich und seelsorgerlich und suchte ihnen wahre Freude mitzuteilen, v. 11, ermahnte sie zur Standhaftigkeit und Treue. Zu dem, was er ihnen damals zum Abschied sagte, gehört auch unser Text. Das ist alles auch uns vermeint und uns zugut aus Eingebung des Heiligen Geistes verzeichnet worden.

Wie Jesus seine Jünger ermahnt, in ihm als Reben
am Weinstock zu bleiben
Er zeigt,

1. Wie selig sie in ihm sind
2. Wie sie in ihm bleiben.

1

Der himmlische Vater pflegt die Reben seines Weinstocks, V. 1. 2. Die unfruchtbaren, schädlichen Wasserschoßlinge entfernt er. Die fruchtbaren Reben reinigt er, indem er hinderliche Auswüchse wegschneidet. Das schmerzt freilich, wenn der Vater seinen Kindern mit dem scharfen Messer der Züchtigung kommt; aber sie danken ihm dennoch dafür; denn so bringen sie mehr Frucht, und eben das wollen sie. Es muß jeder in der demüthigen Erkenntnis der eigenen Unwürdigkeit bleiben, um im rechten Glauben an das Evangelium zu verharren und Frucht zu bringen. Dazu verhilft den Reben die treue Pflege des Gärtners.

Die Reben mit ihren Trauben wachsen aus Christo, dem Weinstock, heraus, V. 4. Eine bloß äußerlich angeheftete Rebe kann nicht leben, geschweige Früchte zeitigen. Das weiß jeder; aber niemand weiß von selber, daß man keine guten Werke tun kann ohne lebendige Verbindung mit Christo. Darum lehrt es Christus anschaulich und wunderschön in diesem Gleichnis. — „Viel Frucht.“ Christus ist ein überaus fruchtbarer Weinstock, der durch seine Reben unaufhörlich massenhaft Frucht bringt. Denn alles, was die Christen in ihm und durch ihn begehren, reden, denken und tun, selbst ihr Essen und Trinken, Gehen und Stehen, Schlafen und Ruhen, ist alles köstliche Frucht vor Gott. Die Person gefällt Gott, darum auch ihr Tun. Andererseits: „Ohne mich könnt ihr nichts tun.“ Die Ungläubigen können auch nicht das geringste gute Werk tun. Was sich an ihnen als gut ausnimmt, vor Menschen, ist eitel Sünde und „glänzendes“ Laster vor Gott. Die Person gefällt Gott nicht, darum auch nicht ihr Tun. Nains Opfer. Ja, V. 6: „werden weggeworfen“, ausgeschloffen schon hier, sicherlich dort, Matth. 3, 12; 7, 22. 23; 13, 41. 42. 49. Verdorren, „werden verstockt“, wenn sie nicht Buße tun wollen. Hingegen die in Christo bleiben, bleiben immer grün, ewig fruchtbar, Ps. 1; 92, 13—16.

Gebet und Gebetserhörung, V. 7. Haben den Geist der Gnade, darum auch des Gebets. Sie glauben, daß Gott in Christo ihr lieber Vater ist; beten in Jesu Namen und in gewisser Zuerficht; erlangen, was ihr Herz wünscht, Ps. 37, 4.

Ehren den Vater, V. 8. Der Vater nimmt ihre Werke an als ihm zur Ehre geschehen und als rechten Gottesdienst. „Und werdet meine Jünger sein.“ „Alle Werke Jesu sind eitel höchster Gottesdienst und Opfer vor dem himmlischen Vater“ (Luther). Indem die Gläubigen viel Frucht bringen, erweisen sie sich als Jesu Jünger. An dem Halten der Gebote Jesu wird es offenbar, daß sie in Jesu Liebe bleiben, V. 10.

Fürwahr, ein unaussprechlich großes Glück, V. 11, haben alle, die in Jesu bleiben. So bleibt doch nun auch in ihm. Gelobt: „Bei dir, Jesu, will ich bleiben“ usw.

2

Wie bleiben Jefu Jünger in ihm? B. 3. Der Vater reinigt sie wohl, damit sie mehr Frucht bringen, aber nicht, als ob sie durch Fruchttragen rein werden müßten. Sie sind zuvor rein, vor allem Fruchtbringen. Jefu Wort von seinem Frieden, 14, 27, das Evangelium von der Reinigung unserer Sünden durch ihn, Hebr. 1, 3, das ist die rechte Reinigkeit derer, die es glauben, Jef. 1, 18; Pf. 51, 9; 1 Joh. 1, 7. Der Glaube bringt den Heiligen Geist mit sich und „naturt“ den Gläubigen anders. Auf diese Weise wird und bleibt ein Mensch dem rechten Weinstock eingepfropft, der Kirche eingegliedert.

Christus wiederholt diese überaus wichtige Lehre, B. 7. In Jefu bleiben heißt seine Worte in sich bleiben lassen. Im Wort haben wir Christum, Röm. 10, 6—8. Haben wir das Evangelium im Herzen, dann auch Christum.

Ein Beispiel eines evangelischen Wortes, B. 9. Jefus weiß, die Schmach und Pein des Kreuzes wartet seiner; aber er weiß auch, daß sein Vater ihn dennoch liebt, ihn auferwecken und erhöhen wird. In diesem Worte blieb er und so in des Vaters Liebe, B. 10. Uns sagt er: „Also liebe ich euch auch.“ Für euch bin ich in die Welt gekommen, für euch gehe ich in den Tod. Das glaubt ihr, und darum seid ihr in meiner Liebe. Das behaltet stets im Auge und im Herzen. So werdet ihr auch in meiner Liebe bleiben und euch durch nichts von mir abtreiben lassen.

Freilich muß man auch Jefu Gebote halten, nicht als ob man dadurch gerecht und selig werden könnte, sondern weil durch ein Leben in Faulheit und Sünden der Glaube zerstört werden würde. Wo keine Frucht ist, da kann auch kein Glaube sein. Wir dürfen weder „glaublose Werkler“ noch „werklose Gläublinge“ sein.

Läßt uns ob dem Wort des Lebens halten, das unsere vollkommene Gerechtigkeit und unser geistliches und ewiges Leben ist, so wir es glauben. Lieb 293, 7.

P. Birkmann

Sonntag Rogate

Joh. 14, 13—21

Am heutigen Sonntag beschäftigt sich die Kirche mit dem Gebet, dem herrlichen Vorrecht der Christen, die ihren Heiland lieben und aus Liebe seine Gebote halten, B. 13—15. Zugleich richten wir an diesem Sonntag den Blick auf Pfingsten, das Fest des Heiligen Geistes. Beides steht in enger Verbindung miteinander. Der Heilige Geist ist der Geist des Gebets, Sach. 12, 10. Er hilft uns beten, wie es Gott gefällig ist, nämlich getrost und mit aller Zuversicht.

Wie der Heilige Geist uns beten hilft

1. Getroßt; denn er ist der Tröster wert
2. Zuversichtlich; denn er ist der Geist der Wahrheit

1

Unmittelbar an die Verheißung der Gebetserhörung knüpft der Heiland die Verheißung des Heiligen Geistes, B. 16. 17.

A. Der Heilige Geist, die dritte Person der heiligen Dreieinigkeit, wahrer Gott mit dem Vater und dem Sohn.

B. a. Den Heiligen Geist nennt der Heiland Tröster. Luther: „Tröster aber heißt ja kein Moses oder Gesezstreiber, der da schreiet mit Teufel, Tod und Hölle, sondern der ein betrübt Herz lachend und fröhlich macht gegen Gott und heißt dich gutes Muts sein, als dem die Sünde vergeben, der Tod erwürgt, der Himmel offen und Gott dich anlacht.“ (St. 2. VIII, 349.) Im Hinblick auf unsere Sündhaftigkeit dürften wir es nicht wagen, mit unserm Gebet vor den heiligen und gerechten Gott zu treten. Aber so vom Heiligen Geist getrüftet, dürfen und sollen wir es ganz getroßt und ohne Furcht tun. Welch ein herrliches Vorrecht!

b. Tröster, Parakletos, einer, der herbeigerufen wird zur Hilfe, zum Beistand. Das ist der Heilige Geist. Er steht uns bei in aller Not. Wie getroßt können wir im Hinblick auf diesen Beistand in allen Nöten beten! Er ist der allmächtige Gott selbst. Keine Not zu groß. „Ist Gott für uns, wer mag wider uns sein?“ Gebet der ersten Christen, Apost. 4, 24—31.

c. „Einen andern Tröster.“ Der erste Tröster der Jünger war Christus, der nun im Begriff stand, ihnen seine sichtbare Gegenwart zu entziehen. Aber eben mit und durch den „andern Tröster“ kommt der Heiland und bleibt bei den Seinen, der lebendige und lebenspendende Heiland, der uns erlöst und selber beten gelehrt hat „Vater unser“ usw. B. 18. 19. Wie getroßt können wir durch den Heiligen Geist in Jesu Namen um alles bitten!

2

Mit aller Zuversicht hilft uns der Heilige Geist beten; denn er ist „der Geist der Wahrheit“, B. 17.

A. Was das heißt. a. Er ist der wahre Gott, die ewige Wahrheit selbst. Was er redet, was er tut, das ist eitel Wahrheit. Darauf kann man sich verlassen im Leben und im Sterben.

b. Er leitet uns in alle Wahrheit, Joh. 16, 13. Er öffnet uns, wie einst den Jüngern zu Pfingsten, das rechte, lebendige, gläubige Verständnis aller göttlichen Heilswahrheiten und macht uns dessen göttlich gewiß, daß das liebe Evangelium, alle Gnadenverheißungen unsers Gottes, Ja und Amen ist, 1 Joh. 5, 6.

B. Mit welcher Zuberficht können wir darum beten, der Erhörung unsers Gebets durch den Heiligen Geist göttlich gewiß! Kein Zweifel an des Heilands Verheißung, B. 13. 14. Mit Recht schließen wir unsere Gebete mit Amen. Luthers Erklärung: „Daß ich soll gewiß sein“, usw. Lied 265, 7. Aug. Bernthal

Himmelfahrtsfest

Lut. 24, 50—53

Der Tag der Himmelfahrt war von der größten Bedeutung für unsern Heiland. Es war die Rückkehr zu seinem Vater nach vollbrachtem Werk, Joh. 16, 5; 17, 4. Das war für ihn ein Freudentag. Nicht mehr mußte er klagen: Matth. 8, 20, sondern: Jes. 66, 1; nicht mehr: Jes. 53, 2, 3, sondern: B. 8. 11. 12; Joh. 17, 10. — Aber auch für uns Christen ist dieser Tag bedeutungsvoll.

Die hohe Bedeutung der Himmelfahrt Christi für uns Christen

1. Sie zeigt uns die Herrlichkeit unsers Heilandes
2. Sie gibt uns Kraft zu seiner Nachfolge

1

B. 50. 51. Vgl. Apost. 1, 4—11. (Kurz schildern.) Da ging in Erfüllung Ps. 47. Da geschah Eph. 1, 20—23; Phil. 2, 9—11. Welch eine wunderbare göttliche Herrlichkeit!

Das ist eine Heilands herrlichkeit. Als segnender Heiland fuhr er auf gen Himmel. Wenn Eltern, Freunde, Verwandte Abschied nehmen, sei es zu einer Reise, sei es zum Tode, so segnen sie wohl die Zurückbleibenden. Ein solcher Segen ist etwas Herrliches und Wünschenswerthes. Jesu Segen ist nicht ein bloß menschlicher, ein bloßer Wunsch, sondern Darreichung der Güter, die er uns anwünscht. Welch reiche Segensfülle war schon von diesen Händen geflossen, die jetzt zum Segnen erhoben wurden, damit seine Jünger und all die Seinen bis ans Ende der Welt ihn als Segensspender im Gedächtnis behalten! Das waren die Hände, die er segnend auf die Kindlein gelegt hatte, Mark. 10, 16; die er noch immer in der Taufe auf seine Kinder legt. Diese Hände hatten Brot gebrochen und wunderbar vermehrt, hatten den Petrus vom Ertrinken gerettet, hatten unzählige Kranke geheilt. Das sind dieselben Hände, die noch heute hilfreich, segnend in irdischer Not über uns ausgebreitet sind, die Hand des Arztes leiten, die Herzen guter Freunde lenken, uns durch alle Wirren und Unruhen sicher hindurchführen, Jes. 42, 16. Das sind die Hände, die am Kreuz durchbohrt wurden und von denen noch heute Ströme des Segens herabfließen, 1 Joh. 1, 7. Diese Hände senden sein Licht und seine Wahrheit, sein teures Wort, das uns leitet und führt himmelwärts auf rechter Bahn. Das sind die Hände, die das Brot brachen und den Kelch darreichten, die

uns noch immer seinen Leib und sein Blut im heiligen Abendmahl geben zur Vergebung der Sünden. Diese Hände rührten den Sarg des Jünglings zu Nain an und werden sich auch zu unserm Grabe ausstrecken. Droben in der seligen Ewigkeit werden diese Hände uns leiten an die Wasserquellen, Jes. 49, 10. Von der Wiege bis zum Grabe, ja über das Grab hinaus, in alle Ewigkeit, werden seine Hände segnend, beseligend über uns ausgebreitet sein. Wahrlich, die Himmelfahrt zeigt uns Jesum in seiner Heilandsherrlichkeit.

2

So wollen wir dem Beispiel der Jünger folgen, V. 52. 53. Wie sie, so wollen auch wir Jesum als unsern Gott und Herrn, unsern Heiland und Erlöser erkennen und anbeten. Wie sie, so wollen auch wir seinen Worten gehorsam sein, zu tun, was er uns aufgetragen hat. Vgl. Apost. 1, 4. So wollen auch wir unser ganzes Leben hier auf Erden nach seinem Wort einrichten, Kol. 3. Die Jünger waren allewege im Tempel. Wie steht es mit unserm Kirchenbesuch? mit unserer Hausandacht? mit unserm Lesen der Schrift? mit unserm Abendmahlsengang? mit der Taufe unserer Kinder? Die Jünger priesen und lobten Gott. Das taten sie auch dann noch, als die Wege, die der Heiland sie führte, ins Gefängnis und in den Tod gingen, Apost. 5, 41; 7, 55; 16, 25. Auch wir wollen auf unserm Lebensweg, der von unserm herrlichen Heiland geplant ist, auf dem wir von seinen segnenden Händen geleitet werden, ihn loben und preisen in guten und bösen Tagen, Röm. 5, 1 ff.; 8, 28—39. So wollen wir alle Tage Himmelfahrt feiern.

Th. Lätisch

Exaudi, Sonntag nach Christi Himmelfahrt

Joh. 14, 1—12

„Denn ich gehe zum Vater.“ „Ich gehe hin, euch die Stätte zu bereiten.“ Diese Worte des Textes — ja der ganze Text — klingen wie ein Echo, wie der Widerhall der Himmelfahrt des Herrn. Es schadet gar nicht, Grund und Ursache, Zweck und Nutzen der Himmelfahrt Christi öfters zu betonen; denn in unserer Zeit der Vielgeschäftigkeit wird leider das Himmelfahrtsfest je länger, je mehr in den Hintergrund gedrängt. Obwohl heute wegen kürzerer Arbeitszeit die Leute mehr Freizeit haben als früher, so haben sie doch scheinbar weniger Zeit für Wochengottesdienste. In vielen Kirchen wird das Himmelfahrtsfest nicht mehr gefeiert.

Auch ist es wahr, daß viele Christen gar wohl wissen, daß die Himmelfahrt viel für den Heiland bedeutete: Triumphzug des Siegers; Krone seiner irdischen Wirksamkeit, Eph. 1, 20—22; 1 Petr. 3, 22; Ps. 68, 18. Viele wissen aber nicht, wieviel die Himmelfahrt des Herrn für uns und alle Kinder Gottes zu bedeuten hat. Unser Text zeigt dies sehr klar und deutlich. Darum:

Der herrliche Nutzen der Himmelfahrt des Heilandes**1. Für diese Zeit 2. Für die selige Ewigkeit****1**

a. Der ganze Text ist ein Trostwort des Heilandes. Er hatte seinen Jüngern deutlich gesagt, daß er bald von ihnen scheiden würde, Joh. 13, 1. 3. 33a. Diese Botschaft hatte ohne Zweifel die Jünger beunruhigt. Darum sagt der Heiland jetzt: Text, V. 1a. Wunderbares Wort des HErrn! Balsam für verwundete, erschrockene Herzen. Die Jünger würden in den nächsten Tagen viel Trübsal erleben, würden den Heiland leiden und sterben sehen. Aber fürchten sollten sie sich nicht. Auch wenn er endlich bei der Himmelfahrt leiblicher Weise von ihnen scheiden würde, sollte doch nicht Furcht und Entsetzen ihre Herzen erfüllen. Gerade sein Hingehen zum Vater sollte ihnen von großem Nutzen sein.

b. Gerade sein Hingehen zum Vater sollte ihnen bessere Erkenntnis des Heilsweges bringen. Text, V. 4. 5. Der Heiland redet von seinem Hingang, von dem Weg zum Vater. Thomas scheint von der ganzen Sache nichts zu wissen. Er sagt: „Wie können wir den Weg wissen?“ Christus gibt den Jüngern nun eine kurze Erklärung des Heilsweges, des Weges zum Vater, Text, V. 6. Sein Leiden und Sterben, seine Auferstehung und gerade auch seine Himmelfahrt, also sein Hingang zum Vater, sollte ihnen klar zeigen, daß er nicht nur ein Wegweiser zum Himmel sei, sondern der Weg. Gerade seine Himmelfahrt würde wieder beweisen, daß er nicht nur die Wahrheit rede, sondern daß er die Wahrheit sei. Sicherlich wirkte der Hingang zum Vater bessere Erkenntnis des einzigen Heilsweges in den Jüngern. Dies gilt auch uns.

c. Die Himmelfahrt des HErrn sollte den Jüngern auch bessere Erkenntnis des Vaters bringen. V. 8 und 9a zeigen, daß es dem Philippus und auch den andern Jüngern noch an der rechten Erkenntnis des himmlischen Vaters fehlte. Jesus zeigt ihnen (V. 7), daß sie in ihm den Vater sehen und erkennen könnten. Gerade auch seine Himmelfahrt, die so deutlich seine Gottheit zeigte und bewies, würde sie also durch bessere Erkenntnis des Heilandes, seines Wesens und seiner Liebe, zur besseren Erkenntnis des Vaters bringen. Denn, sagt der Heiland V. 10. 11, wenn ihr meinen Worten nicht glauben wollt, dann glaubt doch meinen Werken. Sicherlich war die Himmelfahrt des HErrn ein großes Werk des Heilandes. Gerade durch sie sollten sie darum den Vater besser kennenlernen.

d. Gerade die Himmelfahrt gibt den Jüngern Gelegenheit, große Werke zu verrichten, größere als Christus selber, V. 12. Der Heiland sagt dies, und was er sagt, ist wahr. Er hatte kraft seiner Allmacht große Wunder verrichtet. Die Apostel taten nach dem Pfingstfest gleiche Wunder, Apost. 3, 6—8; 9, 33. 34. 40. 41. Aber es erfordert nicht nur göttliche oder gottgegebene Kraft, einen geistlich Toten zum

Glauben zu bringen; dazu ist das ganze Werk der Erlösung, die Menschwerdung des Gottessohnes, sein Hingang durch Leiden und Sterben nötig. Das ist ein viel herrlicheres Wunder, und dies taten die Apostel in viel größerem Maße als selbst Christus, Apost. 2 usw.

e. Auch uns bringt die Himmelfahrt des Heilandes bessere Erkenntnis des Heilsweges, besseres Verständnis des Vaters. Auch wir können durch die Kraft und Macht des Auferstandenen, zur Rechten Gottes sitzenden Heilandes gerade auf dem Gebiete der Mission wunderbare Dinge verrichten.

2

a. Der Nutzen der Himmelfahrt Christi erstreckt sich nicht nur auf diese Zeit, sondern reicht hinein in alle Ewigkeit, R. 2a. Im Himmel (2 Kor. 5, 1) sind viele Stätten, wo unzählige Selige ihr ewiges Weiben und Wohnen finden und haben sollen, Luk. 16, 9; Hebr. 11, 16; Pf. 23, 6. Ob auch die Jünger jetzt denken mögen: Wo sollen wir bleiben, wenn unser lieber Heiland von uns geht? so sollte doch gerade sein Hingang für sie nützlich und tröstlich sein.

b. R. 2b. Der Himmel war ja da, aber der Heiland würde hingehen, würde in den Himmel fahren, um gerade für sie als Einzelpersonen und für die ganze Schar der Gläubigen die Stätte zu bereiten. Auch dies ist ein herrlicher Nutzen der Himmelfahrt, der sich auf die selige Ewigkeit erstreckt.

c. R. 3. Der Heiland will nicht nur zum Vater gehen, um für seine lieben Jünger alles vorzubereiten; nein, er wird wiederkommen. Er kommt zu den Christen in Wort und Sakrament, damit sie auf dem Heilswege bleiben. Er kommt, wenn er sie durch den Tod abruft. Er wird im besonderen Sinne des Wortes wiederkommen zum jüngsten Gericht. Sein Wiederkommen zum Gericht ist für die Gottlosen schrecklich, aber für die Christen höchst erfreulich; denn der Heiland kommt, um sie zu sich zu nehmen. „Auf daß ihr seid, wo ich bin.“ Herrlich, wunderbar ist der Nutzen der Himmelfahrt.

d. Ist dies der Nutzen der Himmelfahrt Christi für dich? Wenn du ein Ungläubiger bist, dann nützt dir die Himmelfahrt nichts. Gerade in den Worten des Textes betont der Heiland den Glauben, R. 1. 10. 11. 12. Nur der gläubige Christ wird wirklich den Nutzen der Himmelfahrt persönlich genießen. Glaubst du an den hingegangenen Heiland, so wirst du endlich eingehen in die ewigen Glorien. E. Mosche

Pfingsten

305. 7, 37—39

„O Heil'ger Geist, lehr bei uns ein!“ Welcher wahre Christ hätte es nicht schon oft gewünscht, daß es ein rechtes Pfingsten bei ihm geben möchte? Welcher treue Prediger hätte nicht schon die Zeit herbeigesehnt, daß es Pfingsten würde in den Häusern seiner Gemeinde?

Wer unter denen, die ihre Kirche liebhaben, hätte nicht darum gefleht, es möchte ein rauschendes Wehen des Geistes durch die ganze Kirche gehen und neues Leben, neuen Eifer, neue Opferwilligkeit erwecken zur Ausbreitung des Reiches Christi?

Was könnte nicht getan, welch mächtige Vorwärtsbewegung könnte nicht begonnen werden auf allen Gebieten der kirchlichen Arbeit, wenn es recht Pfingsten würde in unser aller Herzen! Gerade dies Jubiläumsjahr erregt solche und ähnliche Wünsche in Christenherzen. Wie kann das denn geschehen? Das sagt uns der Herr im Text.

Komm, du Geist des Lebens!

1. Führe uns zu dem Wasser des Lebens!
2. Mache uns zu Segensquellen für viele!

1

a. Der Evangelist sagt uns B. 39, daß Jesus in diesen Worten vom Heiligen Geist redet, insonderheit von dessen Amt und Werk. Er ist es demnach, der uns zu dem Wasser des Lebens führen muß, daß wir davon trinken. Dazu fordert Jesus hier auf. B. 37, am letzten Tage des Laubhüttenfestes, dem größten Tage. Eben hatte der Priester in einem goldenen Krüge das Wasser aus dem Teiche Siloah herbeigetragen und feierlich vor der großen Versammlung ausgegossen. Da trat Jesus auf und rief laut in die Volksmenge hinein: „Wen da dürstet“ usw. Das Volk sollte dankbar der Wohlthat Gottes gedenken, daß er einst auf der Wanderung durch die Wüste Wasser gespendet hatte. Daran knüpft unser Herr seine barmherzige Aufforderung. „Wen da dürstet“, ihr, die ihr seufzt unter der Last des Gesetzes, die ihr euer Unvermögen, das Gesetz zu erfüllen, fühlt, die ihr zittert vor seinem Drohen, die ihr Hilfe haben möchtet, die ihr mühselig und beladen seid, kommt zu mir und trinkt! Da offenbart sich Jesus dem Volke als Heilsbringer, als Erlöser, als die Quelle des Heils. Er ladet jeden, dessen Seele dürstet, ein zu trinken, an ihn zu glauben, B. 38, bei ihm die Gewißheit der vollen Streichung aller Schuld zu holen.

b. Möchte der Heilige Geist auch uns zu dieser Quelle führen! Dazu ist aber Durst nötig. Dieser Durst wird durchs Gesetz erweckt, wie Luther das darlegt in seiner Auslegung dieser Stelle. (Erl. Ausg. 48, S. 194 ff.) Wenn Gottes heiliges Gesetz uns gezeigt hat, daß wir allzumal Sünder sind, des Ruhms mangeln usw., Fluch, Zorn, Verdammnis verdient haben, in uns selbst hoffnungslos verloren sind, wenn wir darüber erschrocken sind, dann ist der Durst da. Dann freuen wir uns, wenn wir aus dem Evangelium den Ruf hören: Kommt zu mir! Und der Heilige Geist zieht uns durch diesen Ruf hin zu Jesu, macht uns trinken aus der Lebensquelle. So sind wir dann erquickt, getröstet. Du Geist des Lebens, komm zu uns, in unser Herz hinein, zeige uns

immer wieder, immer deutlicher diese Lebensquelle, lehre uns, immer mehr uns zu erquiden mit dem Wasser des Lebens, immer mehr uns zu freuen über das Heil, das Christus uns bereitet hat! Dann wird auch folgen, daß

2

a. Der Heilige Geist uns zu Segensquellen für viele macht. B. 38. Der Herr stellt es als eine Tatsache hin, daß alle, die an ihn glauben, Segensquellen für andere sind. Er beruft sich auf die Schrift, Jes. 12, 3—6; 44, 3. 4; Sach. 14, 9 u. a. — B. 39. Dies betrifft zunächst Jesu Jünger. Mit der Verklärung und Erhöhung Jesu sollte die eigentliche Ausgießung des Heiligen Geistes stattfinden. Wohl war der Heilige Geist schon vorher da; alle, die glauben, verdanken das ja seiner Wirksamkeit. Aber die Zeit seit Pfingsten ist doch die eigentliche Zeit des Geistes (Stöckhardt). Am Pfingstfest kam der Heilige Geist in augenfälliger Weise auf die ersten Christen herab. Die Apostel wurden angetan mit Kraft aus der Höhe. Nun, vom Geiste erfüllt, begannen sie ihre große Tätigkeit. Ströme des lebendigen Wassers flossen von ihnen; sie erfüllten die Welt mit ihrer Predigt von Christo. Tausende und aber Tausende wurden durch ihr Zeugnis zu Jesu gebracht, wo sie Erquidung fanden. Solange die Erde steht, werden durch die apostolischen Schriften die Ströme fließen.

b. Möchte der Heilige Geist auch uns zu Segensquellen machen für viele! Dazu haben wir Jesu Heil empfangen, dazu hat uns der Heilige Geist zum Glauben gebracht und zu seligen Gotteskindern gemacht, daß wir nun für unsere Mitmenschen zu Segensquellen werden. In der Familie, in der Gemeinde, in der Synode, überall, wo sich Gelegenheit bietet, sollen wir zeugen von unserm hochgelobten Heiland. Durch unser Zeugnis, sei es mit eigenem Munde oder durch den Mund unserer Missionare, sollen wir Menschen aufmerksam machen auf Jesum, der für alle lebendiges Wasser, Heil und Leben hat. Ach, daß wir darin oft so träge sind! Daß wir oft so wenig opfern wollen für diese herrliche Sache! Unser Fleisch hindert uns so oft daran. Daher wollen wir den Heiligen Geist bitten: Komm, du Geist des Lebens, führe uns zu dem Wasser des Lebens und mache uns zu Segensquellen für viele! Amen.

G. J. Bouman

Pfingstmontag

Joh. 4, 19—26

Das heilige Pfingstfest hat für uns eine mannigfaltige Bedeutung. Zunächst beweist es uns die Gottheit unsers Heilandes; denn er hat an diesem Tag seine Verheißung Joh. 15, 26. 27 aufs herrlichste erfüllt. Das Pfingstfest bezeugt die Gottheit des Heiligen Geistes, der an diesem Tage seine heiligende Tätigkeit zur Gründung der christlichen Kirche so recht eigentlich begonnen hat, Apost. 2, 1 ff. Im Pfingstwunder

tritt uns der dreieinige Gott in seiner vollen Herrlichkeit entgegen, Joh. 16, 28; 14, 26. So wissen wir Gläubigen im Neuen Testament ganz bestimmt, daß wir den wahren Gott kennen. Fürwahr, glückliche Menschen! — Aber da wir nun den wahren Gott kennen, so müssen wir ihn auch recht anbeten, und das ist es, was uns insbesondere unser Text lehrt.

Die wahre Anbetung Gottes

Sie geschieht

1. Im Namen Jesu
2. Im Geist und in der Wahrheit

1

Kurze Zusammenfassung von Joh. 4, 1—18. Auf die Predigt des Gesetzes folgte die des Evangeliums. Die Samariter hatten ihre eigene Gottesverehrung eingerichtet, V. 20. Doch lebte auch in diesem im großen und ganzen heidnischen Volk die Messias Hoffnung fort, V. 25. Gott hatte auch hier seine Auserwählten, wenn sie auch vom wahren Volk Gottes getrennt waren, V. 20. Zu diesen gehörte auch das samaritanische Weib, dem sich Jesus zunächst als Prophet, V. 19, dann aber auch als der Messias zu erkennen gab, V. 26. So brachte Jesus dieses arme Weib zur Erkenntnis ihrer Sünde, lehrte es an den Heiland der Welt glauben und in seinem Namen den wahren Gott recht anbeten, V. 28 ff.

Wir verehren Gott nur dann recht, wenn wir an Christum als unsern Heiland von Herzen glauben und Gott den Vater in seinem Namen anrufen. In unserer Zeit gleicht ein großer Teil der äußeren Christenheit der samaritanischen falschglaubigen Kirche, in der man die Dreieinigkeit, die Gottheit Christi, seine stellvertretende Genugthuung frech leugnet, ja in der man pharisäisch=unionistisch einen Gottesdienst aufgerichtet hat, der Gott nicht gefällt, weil die Werkgerechtigkeit dort gelehrt wird, wodurch Sünder nicht zur Seligkeit geführt werden können. Diese traurige Tatsache wollen wir uns heute am Gründungsfest der christlichen Kirche vor Augen halten, besonders weil uns Gott in dem vergangenen Jahrhundert die lautere Lehre von Sünde und Gnade so herrlich gegeben und erhalten hat. Bleiben wir bei Jesus! Beten wir Gott an im Namen Christi, im herzlichsten Vertrauen auf ihn und seine für uns erworbene Gerechtigkeit! Das gehört ja eigentlich zum Abc der christlichen Lehre; aber das muß heute neu und stark betont werden, eben weil man dieses Abc so vielfach verwirft.

2

Allerdings, wo die Anbetung im Namen Jesu geschieht, da geschieht sie auch im Geist und in der Wahrheit. Aber im Text scheidet Christus diese beiden Gedanken, um uns die rechte Anbetung Gottes von einem doppelten Gesichtspunkt aus zu veranschaulichen.

Wie die Samariter Chriftum nicht kannten, B. 25, fo kannten fie auch nicht die wahre Anbetungsftätte, die Gott im Alten Teftament feinem Volk vorgefchrieben hatte, B. 20, 22. Aber indem Jeſus die Samariterin hierüber recht unterrichtet, fagt er ihr auch, daß in der neuteftamentlichen Kirche die Anbetung Gottes nicht mehr an Jeruſalem gebunden fein werde, B. 23, 24, fondern daß die Gläubigen im Neuen Teftament den Vater im Geiſt und in der Wahrheit anbeten würden. Das heißt einerſeits, daß die Anbetung dann geiſtlich fein wird, wie ja auch Gott ein Geiſt iſt, und andererseits Gott und ſeinem Wort gemäß, wie ja Gott ſelbſt die Wahrheit iſt und uns in ſeinem Wort die Wahrheit darlegt. Die wahre Anbetung Gottes geſchieht daher nicht nach menſchlichem Gutdünken, nicht im Vertrauen auf ſelbſtgewählte Frömmigkeit, nicht durch eigens erdichteten Gottesdienſt, ſondern wie ſie dem Weſen Gottes entspricht und in ſeinem Wort uns vor Augen gemalt wird. Die Anbetung Gottes geſchieht mit andern Worten nicht äußerlich oder örtlich, ſondern innerlich, nicht durch bloßen Werkdienſt, ſondern im Glauben, im Gehorſam, in der Liebe, in der Gottesfurcht.

Das haben auch wir uns heute zu merken, wo mit dem Verneinen des *sola fide* auch das Verneinen des *sola Scriptura* ganz allgemein geworden iſt und man daher Gott nicht ſo anbeten will, wie es ſeinem Weſen entspricht und in ſeinem Wort gefordert wird. Der heutige jüdiſche Gottesdienſt, einerlei ob orthodox oder reform, wird in unſerm Text verworfen; aber auch der römische Gottesdienſt mit ſeiner Werkgerechtigkeit und ſeiner Heiligenverehrung. Auch der heutige Proteſtantismus iſt zum großen Teil in ſeiner Anbetung Gottes ſchriftwidrig geworden. Gebe uns Gott die Gnade, daß wir ihn ſo verehren, wie er von uns verehrt ſein will, das heißt, im Namen Jeſu und im Geiſt und in der Wahrheit! Kein anderer aber hat uns die wahre Gottesanbetung beſſer veranſchaulicht als Jeſus ſelbſt und nach ihm ſeine Apoſtel. Durch Gottes Gnade wurde die wahre Gottesanbetung wieder durch die Reformation der Chriſtenheit bekannt gemacht, und hiezuſande haben unſere frommen Väter ſie uns gelehrt. Gott erhalte uns den wahren Glauben wie auch die wahre Liebe, damit wir ihn ſo anbeten, wie es ihm gefällig iſt!

J. L. Müller



Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

Concerning Lutheran Union.—The readers of the *Lutheraner* and the *Lutheran Witness* have seen the report that the American Lutheran Church and the United Lutheran Church Commissions for Lutheran Union, in a meeting held at Pittsburgh, Pa., have agreed on a statement pertaining to the doctrine of inspiration, on which there had been disagreement between the two commissions. The statement adopted by the two commissions was not given to the press in its complete form.

Without omissions it reads:

"Doctrinal Statement on Inspiration and the Scriptures

"1. The Bible (that is, the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments) is primarily not a code of doctrines, still less a code of morals, but the history of God's revelation for the salvation of mankind and of man's reaction to it. It preserves for all generations and presents, ever anew, this revelation of God, which culminated and centers in Christ, the Crucified and Risen One. It is itself the Word of God, His permanent revelation, aside from which, until Christ's return in glory, no other is to be expected.

"2. The Bible consists of a number of separate books, written at various times, on various occasions, and for various purposes. Their authors were living, thinking personalities, each endowed by the Creator with an individuality of his own, and each having his peculiar style, his own manner of presentation, even at times using such sources of information as were at hand. Nevertheless, by virtue of a unique operation of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21), by which He supplied to the holy writers content and fitting word (2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:12, 13), the separate books of the Bible are related to one another and, taken together, constitute a complete, errorless, unbreakable whole, of which Christ is the center (John 10:35). They are rightly called the Word of God. This unique operation of the Holy Spirit upon the writers is named inspiration. We do not venture to define its mode, or manner, but accept it as a fact.

"3. Believing, therefore, that the Bible came into existence by this unique cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the human writers, we accept it (as a whole and in all its parts) as the permanent divine revelation, as the Word of God, the only source, rule, and norm for faith and life, and as the ever fresh and inexhaustible fountain of all comfort, strength, wisdom, and guidance for all mankind." (On §§ 1 and 2 see *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, Vol. IX, p. 917.)

The undersigned consider the sentence in the Pittsburgh statement (§ 2) "Nevertheless, by virtue of . . . Christ is the center" inadequate. The phrase "taken together" makes the statement ambiguous because it may be understood in a limiting sense, and the sentence lacks the explicit, unequivocal declaration of the verbal inspiration and of the inerrancy of Holy Scripture in all its parts which the situation demands. In view of present-day controversies we consider such an unequivocal, definite avowal necessary.

As to further statements in the A. L. C. and U. L. C. agreement we find the first sentence in § 1, "The Bible . . . is primarily not a code of doctrine, still less a code of morals, but the history of God's revelation," etc., open to misunderstanding. That applies also to the phrase used in § 3 "unique cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the human writers."

Two members of our commission, Drs. Engelder and Arndt, together with President Behnken, met with members of the American Lutheran Church commission and were informed that the American Lutheran Church commissioners by accepting the above statement did not intend to recede from the position on the doctrine of inspiration as set forth in the *Brief Statement* of the Missouri Synod and the *Declaration* of the American Lutheran Church representatives and adopted by the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod. Naturally, we must await official declarations from the A. L. C. authorities, and shall publish them as soon as they have been received.

March 20, 1939

THE COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION

Pastors' Institute at St. Louis. — Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., will, God willing, conduct an Institute for Pastors from Tuesday, July 11, 8:15 A. M., to Saturday, July 15, noon. The following subjects will be treated: 1. The Doctrine of the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, with Special Reference to Current Trends, by Dr. Th. Graebner. 2. Interpretation of the Prophet Amos, by Dr. Walter A. Maier. 3. The Making of the Sermon, by Dr. John H. C. Fritz. 4. The Pastor and Social Problems, by Rev. W. E. Hohenstein. 5. The Value and Meaning of Life in Significant Trends of Contemporary American Literature as Expressed by Some of Its Major Writers, by Prof. L. Blankenbuehler. 6. Fundamentals of Speech, by Prof. E. J. Friedrich. — Fee, including lodging and meals, \$10. Bed linens and blankets extra. Fee for those not lodging and eating at the seminary \$3. — For further information address Pastors' Institute, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

What Is Wrong with the Thesis Method? — In an editorial appearing in the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, March issue, Prof. J. Tanner of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, deals with this question. He introduces his editorial with the note "Warning. When a man is handling dynamite, it is incumbent upon him to give bystanders proper warning. Hence the statement that this article is written in behalf of neither the American Lutheran Conference nor of any of its synods." The first part of the editorial says: "In our efforts to establish Lutheran unity it may not be irrelevant to ask, What kind of unity? The prevalent answer is, Unity in doctrine and practise. Still the answer is not self-explanatory. What is meant by unity in doctrine and practise? Let us begin with doctrine. When a synod has subscribed to the Ecumenical Symbols, Luther's Small Catechism, and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, will it then be accepted into pulpit- and altar-fellowship by other synods that have subscribed to the same confession? Not in America. But if a synod, in addition, has stated its position on all controversial points of doctrine and practise and in this way as well as by its history has proved itself in harmony with the soundest Lutheran teaching, it will of course be accepted by all Lutheran bodies into pulpit-

and altar-fellowship? Not in all cases. Why not? Because in some quarters all this is not accepted as sufficient proof that one is an unadulterated Lutheran. Specific statements (theses) must be prepared setting forth, logically and completely in concise phrases, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Subscription to these theses constitutes the narrow gate through which one enters into pulpit- and altar-fellowship. Now, the thesis method is a two-edged sword. . . ." (The rest of this section will be given farther down.) "Where, then, is the line to be drawn? Without speaking for any synod or laying down rules for anybody, it may probably not be out of order to say that in the synod to which the writer has the privilege of belonging there are those, and the number may be surprisingly large, who decline to subscribe to more theses. We are convinced that in our public declarations we have expressed ourselves so clearly and unequivocally on all doctrinal points that we have established ourselves as true and sound Lutherans. If on this basis others will accept us as brethren in the faith, good and well. If not, we deplore it and will have to get along as best we can till saner days arrive. But no more theses as far as we are concerned."

We offer this, first, as a news item. Our readers are interested in knowing what others think of the doctrinal discussions carried on between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod. But we will be permitted, in addition, to make a few comments. We believe that the thesis method is a sane way of arriving at Lutheran union. This thesis method has its good points. We cannot express that better than in Dr. Tanner's words: "It may clarify. It may exclude misconceptions and focus the true meaning." The purpose of doctrinal statements is to focus the true meaning and to uncover and disavow the respective error. The presentation and frank discussion of straightforward theses has never harmed and retarded the cause of true union. Formulating and adopting theses which cover up doctrinal divergences is an evil thing. No one can be blamed who declines to subscribe to such theses. But that is not the point at issue. The point is being made that under certain conditions self-respect demands that a church-body should refuse to engage in doctrinal discussions with some other church-body. The time may come when a synod would be justified in taking that attitude. But do not be too hasty in declaring that that period has arrived! He that assumes to know absolutely that that time has arrived has assumed a terrible responsibility. So go slow; and if you really desire Lutheran union, keep on using the good old thesis method. It is the natural, the sane thing to do. If ever the time should come that Dr. Tanner and a Missourian should meet on this business, I am sure that the Missourian would ask him, — in the present state of affairs, — and he would ask the Missourian: What does your synod teach on the controverted question of the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture? He would say, and the Missourian would say: We believe in that doctrine one hundred per cent., and we will ask our synods to go on record, once more, as teaching that. There's no dynamite in such a thesis. It would cause great joy in many quarters. There will be dynamite in it only with respect to those who would like to detract from the supreme

and sole authority of Scripture. Then, we should have to have — as conditions now are — a thesis on conversion. Both would declare, for instance, that the unconverted man has the ability to decide against God, but not the ability to decide for God. No harm in confessing that for the thousandth time! There is dynamite in such a thesis only for those who have synergistic leanings and objectives.

The thesis method would be wrong only if applied in the spirit which is denounced in the last issue of the *C. T. M.*, where in discussing a similar matter the writer says: "Their endeavor to express the truth which they believe in their hearts, and in the possession of which they rejoice, with as much clarity as possible and their submitting such expression of their faith to others with the remark: This is where we stand; will you share our position? is regarded as 'a method of attaining fellowship which consists in one party offering a document to the other to be signed on the dotted line.' . . . We are convinced that Missourians with practical unanimity will reply that their attitude is misunderstood."

One particular objection to the thesis method is expressed by Dr. Tanner in these words: "Now, the thesis method is a two-edged sword. It may clarify, and it may confuse. It may exclude misconceptions and focus the true meaning. On the other hand, it may leave the erroneous idea that the fulness of the truth has been probed because the truth has been intellectually formulated. A further confusion is hidden in the assumption that, where there is intellectual agreement, there is also spiritual unity. Another danger consists in the establishing of a rigid intellectual strait-jacket that must be put on by everybody if he is to escape the suspicion of doctrinal irregularity. Add to this that in our churches we have practically no voice of the lay people checking and testing ecclesiastical logic and abstractions on the basis of the experiential understanding of the Word of God as worked out in the practical life of non-ecclesiastical Christians, and we have the elements of a heart-and-mind-killing scholasticism." The objection is not well taken. What is said, for instance, about an "intellectual strait-jacket" would apply to the Formula of Concord and any other confession of the Church as well as to any other set of theses. And particularly the last sentence contains a great amount of dynamite. E.

A Correct Interpretation of the U. L. C. Declaration on "The Word of God and Scripture." — Let Dr. Traver interpret it. In "the Young People" column of the *Lutheran* of February 22 he takes up "the eight statements in the Declaration" and discusses them one by one. He discusses that fine statement "We believe that the whole body of the Scriptures in all its parts is the Word of God." Are these words to be taken in their exact, full sense? The young people of the U. L. C. are asking: Does our Church teach that *every* statement of the Bible is absolutely true? Dr. Traver tells them that the Declaration does not say so. He tells them that in two paragraphs of his exposition. The first one reads: "This whole revelation of God to man, completed in Jesus Christ, is faithfully recorded and preserved in the Holy Scriptures and comes to us alone through them. *They are the infallible truth 'in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation.'*" We may therefore speak of

the Holy Scriptures as *'The Word of God.'*" (Italics in original.) When the young people ask Dr. Traver, whether everything in the Scriptures is infallible, he tells them to note the restriction insisted on by the Declaration. "We accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth of God in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation." We have been pointing to that fatal restriction and now Dr. Traver tells us that we have understood the Declaration correctly. He does not want his young people to hold that the Holy Scriptures are infallible in all matters therein recorded. The other paragraph reads: "Does not modern science contradict the Scriptures? God did not inspire the writers of the Scriptures to know all truth. He gave men minds to use in investigation and discovery. For instance, the laws governing the use of airplanes have been learned through the painful processes of many years. It is not necessary that men should know how to fly in order to be saved from their sins. Bible writers wrote with the background of their age and its scientific beliefs. *The one thing that they were called to do was to reveal God to men.*" (Italics in original.) Dr. Traver is warning the young people against taking the statement "We accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth" as meaning that every historical, geographical, scientific statement is true. Dr. Traver tells them that the holy writers wrote false scientific beliefs into the Bible. The young people of the U. L. C. are certainly not asking him whether airplanes are available to take men to heaven. But they are asking him: Can we be sure that our Holy Bible is reliable in every statement it makes? Dr. Traver tells them: No; only in matters that pertain to our salvation is it infallible. — Dr. Traver has interpreted the Declaration correctly. The commissioners that drew up the Declaration told the U. L. C. convention that adopted the Declaration: "Our commission was unable to accept the statement of the Missouri Synod that the Scriptures are the infallible truth 'also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters.'" (See C. T. M., Vol. 9, p. 917. *The Lutheran*, Oct. 5, 1938.)

No doubt some of these young people will ask Dr. Traver: What about your statement in the introduction of your article that "Lutherans insist that *the Bible is the Word of God*"? (Italics in original.) How "may we speak of the Holy Scriptures as 'the Word of God'" when not everything in the Bible is infallible? Can a false statement be called a word of God? Why do you say that the Scriptures "*in all its parts*" is the Word of God when you refuse to call certain parts infallibly true? Such questions are sure to arise. They have already been raised. A layman wrote a letter to the *Lutheran* of January 18, saying: "In Section 5 [we have] this declaration: 'We therefore accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth of God in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation.' What as to matters that do not pertain to His revelation and our salvation? Are some portions of the Scriptures not infallible? Is not that a plausible inference? It would appear to this writer that in Section 6 this position is contradicted when it is asserted: 'Therefore we believe that the whole body of Scripture in all its parts is the Word of God.'" The layman is faulting his theological leaders for using inexact language.

The U. L. C. needs a revised Declaration. Let Dr. H. C. Alleman

write it, who sticks to the old General Synod formula and says that "the Bible contains the Word of God" (*Luth. Church Quarterly*, July, 1936, p. 240). The new Declaration, using exact language, will say: "We may therefore speak of the Holy Scriptures as containing 'the Word of God.'"

E.

A Representative of the Augustana Synod Once More.—In our last issue we reprinted the section of a letter of Dr. Bergendoff which the *Lutheran* (U. L. C.) had reproduced and in which there was found the heated refusal of "signing on the dotted line." We are now in possession of the complete document and consider it but fair that the first part of the letter, which deals with the position of the Augustana Synod concerning certain doctrines be reprinted also. The letter, it should here be stated, was addressed to a pastor of the Missouri Synod who had asked for certain information concerning the Augustana Synod. The part not yet printed by us reads as follows:

"Your letter places a considerable obligation upon me, for it asks for little short of a complete exposition of the teaching and practises of the Augustana Synod. Yet I welcome your request and am happy over the spirit in which it is written. The conviction has grown on me over a considerable number of years that the Augustana and the Missouri synods know very little about each other, and, what is worse, the little they do know is largely untrue. Far more than we probably are aware, we have been so careful to point out each other's faults, and so little concerned about understanding the good qualities of each other, that in the minds of our people the resulting impressions are far from the truth.

"Your first question concerns doctrine. My answer is that the early history of our synod is the story of an immigrant group trying to find itself in the strange conditions of a country where doctrine was frowned upon even in many Lutheran circles. Our leaders finally organized an independent synod because of their conviction that the unaltered Augsburg Confession must be the basis of sound Lutheranism. They consequently chose the name Augustana, itself almost a unique appellation for a Lutheran synod in America, where racial origin and geography determined in most cases the names of synods. It would require a considerable volume for me to tell the doctrinal history of our synod since 1860, but I can sum up my conclusion very simply, because I believe it to be so clearly proved in that history: To this day the synod has not wavered in its allegiance to the confessions of the Lutheran Church but would meet every fair test that might be applied to its orthodoxy.

"You specify several details, and I shall give as direct an answer as I can. We do not believe nor teach that God elects man to salvation by virtue of anything in man, be it either his works or his faith as foreseen by God. The election is entirely by grace. In my teaching as professor of systematic theology in the theological seminary I have consistently held that the phrase *electio intuitu fidei* is misleading and should not be used. That we cannot explain the love of God who chooses us in Christ even as sinners is no reason why we should add an explanation which does not explain but only confuses. (I have tried to make clear our position in my brief exposition in *The Making and Meaning of the Augsburg Confession*.)

"You state that 'the accusation is many times made against the Augustana Synod that it has an erroneous conception of the inspiration of the Bible.' I might wish that you had gone into detail to say what that erroneous conception is. For it is always easier to accuse a man for holding an erroneous conception than to point out what is the error. In brief, my reply is that the doctrine of inspiration of Scripture has not been formulated by the Lutheran Church in her confessional writings. Until the Lutheran Church as a whole, and not merely some one fraction of it, determines what that doctrine is to be, it is hardly fair for one part of the Church to determine for the whole Church so vital a matter. In fact, I do not know that the synod has anywhere stated formally the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible—it has been content to accept what the original confessions of the Lutheran Church say (or do not say) on this point. But while I cannot refer you to any definition of our own of inspiration, I can refer you to our catechism, our preaching, our teaching, and say that the Augustana Synod is not one whit behind the Missouri Synod in insisting that the Bible is the Word of God. That is the charter for our teaching and preaching, and while we may not know enough to say how exactly the Scriptures came to be, we do, like the blind man, know that, before this Word touched our lives, we could not see, but now we do see, and acknowledge these Scriptures to be the voice of God speaking through prophets, evangelists, and apostles.

"You inquire concerning our teaching about the millennium. Here again we allow a variety of expressions, since the Church has not forbidden the study of what things may be hoped for. True, the Augsburg Confession condemns those 'who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.' I do not personally hold to any form of millenarianism, as I have sought to show in a pamphlet on this subject, but I do not believe either that the Church shall discipline teachers who otherwise interpret Scriptures in these matters. I doubt that there are any more millenarians in the Augustana Synod than in the Missouri Synod, and of the few that I know in our Synod I can say that they are earnest and faithful Christians. To exclude these from our Synod on this ground would be as far from my mind as to make this a cause of separation between your and my synods. It is my contention that the millennium is not a doctrine on which salvation depends. Therefore I deprecate emphasis upon it for either personal or synodical reasons.

"On the question of Sabbath observance I do not believe I need to dwell, for it has never occurred to me that variations which might be found among us here have any but social explanations. I can think of no point of doctrine being here involved. Concerning the Minneapolis Theses may I refer you to my article in *Augustana Quarterly*, October, 1937?"

It is gratifying to see this explicit rejection of the phrase *intuitu fidei* in connection with the discussion of the doctrine of predestination. What Dr. Bergendoff says about the teaching of his church-body on the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is less satisfying. When he states that the doctrine of inspiration has not been formulated by the Lutheran

Church in her confessional writings, he is right. His presentation, however, does not give a complete view of what the situation is. Though not discussing the doctrine of inspiration in systematic fashion, the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church by implication set forth the teaching that everything in the Bible is inspired and that hence every statement in it is true. We do not see how any unprejudiced person can read our Symbolical Books and arrive at any other conclusion than this, that they view the Bible as verbally inspired and as inerrant in every point. That in the Augustana Synod the teaching of verbal inspiration has repeatedly been rejected could easily be proved. The *Lutheran Companion* recently contained an article in which such rejection is definitely expressed. With respect to millenarian teaching it is undeniable that articles have appeared in church-papers of the Augustana Synod which were chiliastic. The majority of the ministers in the Augustana Synod may be opposed to such teaching; we hope they are. But they ought not let the teaching of such doctrine go unchallenged. What we ask of the Augustana Synod ministers and teachers is not that they immediately separate from such erring brethren; it may be that, owing to faithful witness-bearing, separation will not become necessary at all. But what we have to demand is that they earnestly testify against these errors and endeavor to bring about their elimination, mindful of the word of the apostle "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," Gal. 5:9. If Missouri Synod ministers have sponsored and published millenarian doctrine, we are not aware of it. A.

Honesty—or Accident?—The Jesuit *America* carries a column headed "Events." It takes the place of the humorous column in other papers and magazines and speaks of extraordinary events, treating them in a lighter vein, with much irony and satire thrown in. The issue of February 25 reports among other things:

"New methods of treating diseases were developed. . . . When he learned that a patient suffering with nervous indigestion was worrying about an unpaid bill, a Western doctor paid the bill, completely curing the malady. . . . Protests from farmers indicated that many hunters aiming at wild life, such as pheasants, hit non-wild life, such as cows. . . . Crime, according to reports, continued. . . . In the West a suitor, burning with love, set fire to his intended's house when he discovered she was not burning with love for him. . . . One of the world's greatest collectors died in the West. Interested in fowl play, he collected during life 3,000 wish-bones. His lifelong ambition to possess an ostrich wish-bone was frustrated. Had he lived a little longer, he would have achieved his great ambition. . . . Science announced new unearthings. . . . A sandpaper highway surface that will do away with skidding was described in Cleveland. Skidding in bathtubs may be obviated by the same material, insiders hinted. . . . The possibility that cows may be trained to do the work of bloodhounds was broached, following news from New Zealand that a herd of cows had tracked a criminal to a tree."—And then, without any distinguishing mark, the column ends:

"In the whole world there is now no Vicar of Christ. . . . Thousands of millions of people dot the earth's surface. Not one of them is in-

fallible in matters of faith or morals. The cardinal who will be elected—whoever he is—is not infallible now. At the moment he accepts the election the prerogative of infallibility will descend upon him. He will hand on to his successor the unchanged revelation of Christ as 261 Popes before him have brought it unchanged to him. The last Pope will be teaching the same doctrines that the 262d Pope teaches."

To a Protestant it seems that somehow this notice slipped into the right column.

H.

Brief Items.—Recently there died at Glasgow, Scotland, Dr. W. L. Baxter, who attained to the ripe old age of ninety-six years. A greater attainment was that he knew the whole Bible by heart. Even to the last, despite his age, he was able to repeat any passage from memory.

The Gallup Poll, a recent statement by the American Institute of Public Opinion, declared the church-conducted lotteries to be the "commonest form of gambling among Americans today." A crying shame indeed!

For the benefit of the blind clergy of our country a new magazine will be published in Braille, bearing the title *Theological Times*.

Roman Activism is making rapid headway in our country, as was proved by the press reports on the occasion of the demise of the last Pope, when Catholicism had the entire press of the land "Romanized." Now the bishops of the American Catholic Church are planning to establish a "Catholic bureau of information and publicity" to disseminate "facts on Catholic belief and teachings" for the benefit of the more than "100,000,000 Americans who are not Catholic and the 22,000,000 members who are." They expressed it as the duty of the Church to "contribute its philosophy to the current thought" for the benefit especially of non-Catholics. In learned parlance this "philosophy" goes by the name of Neo-Thomism; popularly it is known as plain Romanism.

The new president of the Federal Council of Churches is the Rev. Dr. Geo. A. Buttrick, pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. Like his predecessors of late, he is an outspoken Modernist and an outstanding defender of the Auburn Affirmation. The Federal Council is a body to which the warning in Ps. 1:1 applies: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

J. T. M.

The readers of this journal would hardly expect a long article on the new Pope. That Cardinal Pacelli, elected on the day after the beginning of the conclave and now known as Pius XII, will continue the work of his predecessors and that his talents and accomplishments will be employed to perpetuate what all true Protestants cannot but regard as a huge fraud, there is no reason to doubt. "*Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum,*" a cardinal said to the multitude when he proclaimed the papal election. Lutherans, however, turn to 2 Thess. 2 for words to express their feeling.

The Augustana Synod deplores the death of Dr. S. G. Youngert, who for many years served Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Ill.,

as professor of New Testament Greek, Catechetics, and Philosophy. He died February 26 at the age of 77. An accomplished linguist, he was appointed member of a commission after the World War to dispense aid in Central Europe.

The *Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche*, the paper of our brethren in Germany, reports the death of Dr. Herman Menge, widely and favorably known as a translator of the Bible. He reached the high age of 98 years. Having taught at a classical school, he began his work as Bible translator when he was sixty years old and had retired from his position as *Gymnasiallehrer*.

As we see from press reports, the followers of Dr. Frank Buchman, who have been called, and have called themselves, Oxford Groups, are running into difficulty with respect to the use of this name. The Oxford University representative in the British Parliament is protesting against the assumption of this name by the adherents of Dr. Buchman, stating that there is no connection between the University of Oxford and Buchmanism. The appellation has no standing in law, and a bequest made to the Oxford Groups could not be collected when Dr. Buchman presented himself as the head of the movement.

The *Lutheran School Journal*, edited by a committee of our River Forest Teachers College faculty, has developed into a very attractive magazine. Its reading-matter is varied, including material which is of interest to the theologian as well as to the teacher, and its external appearance is extremely inviting. Whoever has not seen it in its new dress ought to ask for a sample copy.

Dr. L. G. Abrahamson, eighty-three years old, recently sent in his resignation as editor-in-chief of the *Augustana*, Swedish organ of the *Augustana Synod*. Dr. Abrahamson has had that position for thirty years. His resignation was not accepted. He was asked to remain as chief editor and given a new assistant, Dr. A. T. Lundholm, one of the best-known clergymen of the Synod. — *Lutheran Standard*.

The Roman Catholic bishop of Brooklyn, the Rev. Thomas E. Molloy, is said to have written in a letter to his clergy that he entertained the hope that Catholic schools "from those of elementary grade to the university, inclusive, may soon be properly recognized as agencies of public service and as such should be justly supported by public funds." There is no denying that our priceless American possessions of religious liberty and separation of Church and State are in jeopardy.

An affirmation is being circulated among ministers of all denominations which may be called a pacifist pronouncement. The chief sentences of it are said to be the following: "We believe that in the cross is revealed God's way of dealing with wrong-doers and that to this way all Christians are called. . . . We believe that God leads His Church into new life through obedience of the individual believer in refusing war for Christ's sake." Not long ago it was reported that one hundred ministers had signed the statement, among them such well known Modernists as H. E. Fosdick and J. H. Holmes. How sadly they err in thinking that Christ branded the career of a soldier and participation in war *per se* as wicked has often been shown.

From Doerffling & Francke, Leipzig, publishers of the famous *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, has come this communication, "Auf vielfache Anfragen hin koennen wir nur mitteilen, dass die *Kirchenzeitung* am 21. Dezember 1938 verboten wurde." Enough said!

The religious press carries the item that the Department of Public Safety in the city of Cleveland will no longer issue permits for the playing of "bunco," which until now has been very popular in many churches of that city.

The London *Catholic Herald* reports that Nazi authorities have closed down the Catholic theological faculty of Munich University on the ground that Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich, interfered with non-ecclesiastical affairs by "forbidding students to attend lectures" by a priest-professor who has been used by the Nazis in their campaign for the abolition of Catholic schools, and has attacked Cardinal Faulhaber and urged Catholics to send the children to Nazi schools.

Christian Century

It is reported that coordination of the activities of nearly 400 Lutheran welfare agencies throughout the country will be undertaken by the newly created department of National Lutheran Welfare of the National Lutheran Council, of which Rev. Clarence E. Krumbholz of New York is director. — *Christian Century*.

The *Lutheran* of March 22, 1939, prints some flippant remarks of a Nebraska correspondent, who speaks of an intersynodical conference which discussed the matter of prayer-fellowship. When this man says: "The next game in this intersynodical *rapprochement* between Missouri and the American Lutheran Church will come off September 19, at Luther (Augustana) College, Wahoo, Nebr.," he employs a tone which makes it difficult to engage in a discussion with him.

In the *Living Church* the interesting case of J. Middleton Murry is related. Described as one of the first half dozen of critics and publicists writing today in English who has lectured frequently on literary and philosophical matters and written voluminously, he formerly was altogether negative in his theological thinking. But now, at the age of fifty, he has entered Wescott House, the theological college at Cambridge, "to prepare for ordination to priesthood in the Church of England." A.

Book Review — Literatur

The New Testament and the Laws of Evidence. By Harry Rimmer, D. D., Sc. D. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1938. 119 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.00.

With pleasure we announce the appearance of another volume from the prolific pen of Dr. Rimmer, known as an intrepid defender of the divine character of our Bible. In tilts with enemies of the Scriptures this book can render valuable services. Its aim is to show that, if the New Testament books are examined according to the well-established laws of evidence, their trustworthiness and reliability will become manifest. The writer has acquainted himself with legal procedure and adduces a number of interesting court decisions that have a bearing on his thesis. Quite fascinating and amazing is the account of the trial in which a professor of the University of Chicago, a higher critic, employing the methods he uses in establishing relationships in the Old Testament, endeavored to show that H. G. Wells, the famous English novelist, in a certain instance was guilty of plagiarism — an attempt which one tribunal after the other called ridiculous (cf. p. 14 ff.). The four chapters of the book have these captions: 1. "The Legal Value of the Gospels as Evidence"; 2. "The Integrity of the Witnesses"; 3. "The Amazing Record of Critical Injustice"; 4. "The Firm Foundation of the Christian Revelation." In general we have found the presentation clear and convincing. Here and there the author under the impulse of passionate zeal indulges in an overstatement. His book would be more effective if he refrained from judging the motives of the higher critics (cf. p. 73). We wish that, if a second edition should be called for, the author would carefully scrutinize every statement and either expunge or modify those that cannot be proved.

W. ARNDT

Der Heilige Gottes. Eine Erläuterung des Markus-Evangeliums. Von Lic. Eduard Ellwein. 112 Seiten 6¼×9¼. Chr.-Kaiser-Verlag, München. Preis: RM. 2.80.

Diese kurze, packende, für das Christenvolk bestimmte Erklärung zum Evangelisten Markus erschien zuerst zwischen 1936 und 1938 in dem Blatt „Deutsche Evangelische Erziehung“, fand da aber eine solch günstige Aufnahme, daß sie nun in Buchform erscheint. Sie will der geistlichen Auserbauung und Stärkung der Gemeinde dienen und hat, wie der Autor sagt, nur ein einziges Anliegen: daß der „Heilige Gottes“ auch uns heilig werde. Bekannt ist Ellwein als Verfasser verschiedener theologischer Werke, besonders aber als Übersetzer von Luthers Vorlesungen über den Römerbrief. In seiner Erklärung legt er das ganze Evangelium als verbindlichen Text aus, ohne daß die wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis dabei zu kurz kommt, in zehn Kapiteln: Der Anfang, das erste Auftreten Jesu in Galiläa, die Pharisäer im Widerspruch mit der freien Gnade Jesu, Gleichnisse, Wunderaten, weitere Wirksamkeit Jesu in Galiläa und in den angrenzenden Gebieten, der Weg zur Passion, letzte Wirksamkeit Jesu in Jerusalem, die Leidensgeschichte, Ostern. In kurzen Sätzen und Abschnitten findet man hier viel tiefgehende Ergegnisse zusammengepackt, aber doch auch nicht zu schwer für das Volk.

Manchmal stimmt man dem Autor nicht zu, z. B. in seiner Auslegung der Worte Jesu „Es stehen etliche hie, die werden den Tod nicht schmecken, bis daß sie sehen das Reich Gottes mit Kraft kommen“ (S. 57). Erfüllt hat sich diese Weissagung Christi doch, und just so, wie dies der Schreiber, wenn auch etwas unbestimmt, andeutet. Seine Kritik über den reichen Jüngling (S. 68 f.): „Dies ganze, freie Herz für Gott, das fehlt ihm“, ist doch kaum genügend. Es fehlte diesem Jüngling wahrlich noch weit mehr. Doch stören diese Unebenheiten nicht den Genuß des Büchleins als Ganzes. Wir wünschen, man hätte solche Werte hierzulande in englischer Sprache. Für unsere theologische Jugend, die im Deutschen zumeist schwach ist, empfehlen wir diese Erklärung auch gerade wegen des einfachen, edlen Deutsch, das der Autor so fein zu schreiben vermag; für uns selbst war es ein seltener Genuß, das Ganze von Anfang bis zu Ende lesen zu dürfen.

J. E. Müller

The Religion of Jesus the World Religion. By W. L. Evans. Fleming H. Revell Company, N. Y. 63 pages, 7½×5. Price, 75 cts.

The following extracts characterize the theology and aim of the social-rehabilitation churchmen. "Jesus taught a world-religion of one God for all, and it was a pure religion free from all forms and certainly was undefiled. It was the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men, and its component parts were 'brotherhood, creative service, and self-forgetfulness.'" (P. 59.) "Abraham Lincoln was once asked why he had not united with some church or denomination; to which he replied: 'I have not felt myself free to unite with any church because of their long statements of creeds and doctrines. But when any church will inscribe over its altar as its sole qualification for membership the condensed statement of Law and Gospel by our Savior: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart," and: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," that church will I join with all my heart and with all my soul.' This great American emancipator had a spiritual kinship with the greater Emancipator of all mankind." (P. 39.) "The two great commandments of the Bible, the Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule, all emphasized by Jesus, would heal all our social and economic ills and bring in the kingdom of heaven on earth. This is the great objective in the religion of Jesus." (P. 50.) "The state and nation can solve all their problems with the religion of Jesus if the great principles of Jesus be applied to our needs. All wars, of every nature, economic, political, social, and religious, would be no more. Mutual trade relations between all nations would be established, and all helpful relations on a cooperative basis between states and nations would be worked out for the mutual good of all. This would bring to pass a new world-order of things and would bring to pass the kingdom of heaven among men." (P. 13.) — The foreword was written by Dr. L. R. Scarborough, president of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

TH. ENGELDER

Nachfolge. Von Dietrich Bonhöffer. Chr.-Kaiser-Verlag, München. 229 Seiten 6¼×9¼. Preis: RM. 4.40, geheftet; 5.60, gebunden.

In seinem Bestreben, vollen Ernst mit der Notwendigkeit der Heiligung im christlichen Leben zu machen, vermischt der Verfasser leider den Unterschied zwischen rechtfertigender und heiligender Gnade. Sein erster Satz lautet: „Billige Gnade

ist der Todfeind unserer Kirche." Auf derselben Seite schreibt er: „Billige Gnade heißt Gnade als Lehre, als Prinzip, als System; heißt Sündenvergebung als allgemeine Wahrheit, heißt Liebe als christliche Gottesidee. Wer sie bejaht, hat schon Vergebung seiner Sünden.“ „In dieser Kirche findet die Welt billige Bededung ihrer Sünden, die sie nicht bereut und von denen frei zu werden sie erst recht nicht wünscht.“ Gewiß, es gibt einen Mißbrauch der freien Gnade Gottes, und gegen diesen Mißbrauch muß der Prediger mit der Schrift aufs ernstlichste zeugen. Aber das berechtigt einen nun nicht, mit dem Verfasser den verhängnisvollen Fehler zu begehen, in die Definition der rechtfertigenden Gnade die Heiligung als einen wesentlichen Teil aufzunehmen. Wir lesen z. B.: „Es war dieselbe Gnade Christi, . . . die den untreuen Petrus in die letzte Gemeinschaft des Martyriums rief und ihm damit alle Sünden vergab. Gnade und Nachfolge gehören für das Leben des Petrus unaufhörlich zusammen.“ Der letzte Satz ist ja unzweifelhaft wahr. Aber nicht wahr, weil der klaren Schrift widersprechend, ist die Behauptung, daß dem Petrus erst damit alle Sünden vergeben wurden, daß durch die Gnade er in die letzte Gemeinschaft des Martyriums gerufen wurde. Vergebung der Sünden hatte er einzig und allein um des vollkommenen Verdienstes Christi willen. Weiter sagt der Verfasser: „Wenn Luther von der Gnade sprach, so meinte er sein eigenes Leben immer mit, da er durch die Gnade erst in den vollen Gehorsam Christi gestellt worden war. Er konnte gar nicht anders von der Gnade reden, als eben so. . . . Die Erkenntnis der Gnade war für ihn der letzte radikale Bruch mit der Sünde seines Lebens, niemals aber ihre Rechtfertigung. . . . Sie war ihm jeweils ‚Resultat‘, freilich göttliches, nicht menschliches Resultat. Dieses Resultat aber wurde von den Nachfahren zur prinzipiellen Voraussetzung einer Kalkulation gemacht. Darin lag das ganze Unheil. Ist Gnade das von Christus selbst geschenkte ‚Resultat‘ christlichen Lebens, so ist dieses Leben keinen Augenblick dispensiert von der Nachfolge. Ist aber Gnade prinzipielle Voraussetzung meines christlichen Lebens, so habe ich damit im voraus die Rechtfertigung meiner Sünden, die ich im Leben in der Welt tue. Ich kann auf diese Gnade hin sündigen; die Welt ist ja im Prinzip durch Gnade gerechtfertigt.“ (S. 7, 8.) Der Verfasser tut Luther unrecht oder hat ihn gründlich mißverstanden. Luther wußte wohl zu unterscheiden zwischen rechtfertigender und heiligender Gnade. Gewiß, die rechtfertigende Gnade heiligt auch den Menschen, und wer nicht durch die Gnade geheiligt wird, der ist auch nicht gerechtfertigt oder hat die rechtfertigende Gnade wieder verscherzt. Aber wenn Luther von der rechtfertigenden Gnade redet, so schließt er nie sein durch die Gnade in den vollen Gehorsam Christi gestelltes Leben mit in den Begriff der rechtfertigenden Gnade ein, selbst wenn dies Leben das von Christo geschenkte Resultat ist. Luther schließt vielmehr mit der Schrift geklärt, daß jegliches Werk und Tun des Menschen, sei es durch natürliche Kräfte oder durch die Gnade hervorgebracht, von der rechtfertigenden Gnade aus. Man lese doch Röm. 3, 28; 4, 1—5; 11, 6. Der Verfasser vergißt, daß nach Luther und der Schrift die freie Gnade Gottes in Christo prinzipielle Voraussetzung der Rechtfertigung sowie der Heiligung ist, ohne welche Voraussetzung es überhaupt keine Möglichkeit christlichen Glaubens und christlichen Lebens gibt. Nach Röm. 5, 18 und 2 Kor. 5, 19 ist eben Sündenvergebung eine „allgemeine Wahrheit“, hat Gott schon in Christo die Welt mit sich selber versöhnt, ihr die Sünde nicht zugerechnet, ist schon durch eines Gerechtigkeits der Rechtfertigung des Lebens über alle Menschen gekommen. Der Mensch nimmt diese längst geschehene Rechtfertigung und Vergebung im Glauben an und gelangt so in den Besitz der für ihn erworbenen, für ihn vorhandenen, ihm im

Wort angebotenen Rechtfertigung. Das ist klare Lehre der Schrift, die dem Vorwurf des Verfassers, daß man dann auf Gnade hin sündigen darf, allen Grund nimmt, Röm. 6.

Diese Vermischung von Gesetz und Evangelium zieht sich durch das ganze Buch hindurch, so daß man mit großer Vorsicht alles prüfen muß, zumal der Verfasser auch in andern Punkten von Gottes Wort abirrt. So sagt er, daß Paulus „Gliederchaft am Leibe Christi ganz an die beiden Sakramente bindet“. „Nicht das Wort der Predigt bewirkt unsere Gemeinschaft mit dem Leibe Christi; das Sakrament muß hinzukommen.“ (S. 163.) Er bringt mit allem Ernst auf Gemeindezucht, auch Lehrzucht, von der er die trefflichen Worte sagt: „Durch falsche Lehre wird die Quelle des Lebens der Gemeinde und der Gemeindezucht verborgen. Darum wiegt die Verfündigung gegen die Lehre schwerer als die Verfündigung im Wandel.“ (S. 212, Anm. 20.) Doch nennt er den täglichen Hirtendienst des Amtsträgers die erste Stufe der Kirchenzucht, die brüderliche Vermahnung der Glieder untereinander die zweite. (S. 209.) Der Prediger, der sich vor den Irrtümern des Buches zu hüten weiß, kann mit Vorteil die manchen trefflichen Ausführungen lesen.

L h. V ä t s h

Neue Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Bibel im Mittelalter. Herausgegeben in Gemeinschaft mit Otto Grüters und Erich Zimmermann von Prof. Dr. Hans Vollmer-Hamburg. Mit einer Beigabe: „Handschriftliche Einträge in Bibeln und Gesangbüchern und deren Wert für Familien- und volkstümliche Religionskunde“ von Bruno Goldschmit. Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, Potsdam. 176 Seiten und 25 Seiten 6½ × 9½. Preis: RM. 24.

Dieses neueste Heft in den Veröffentlichungen des Deutschen Bibelarchivs in Hamburg bietet eine Fülle interessanten Materials nicht nur für den Sachverständigen und Spezialisten, sondern auch für den Nichtspezialisten auf dem Gebiet der Bibelforschung in deutschen Landen. Auf 90 Seiten bietet Erich Zimmermann eine reichhaltige Ausführung über „Die deutsche Bibel im religiösen Leben des Spätmittelalters“, worin er unter anderm auch eingehend die Verbreitung der deutschen Bibel in dieser Zeitperiode beschreibt. Ganz besonders interessant sind die Paragraphen über die Verbreitung der Bibel unter den Laien. Er schreibt unter anderm: „So sind deutsche Bibeln in Laienkreisen hauptsächlich bei Fürsten, wohlhabenden Adligen und Patriziern zu finden, nur selten in den unteren Schichten.“ (S. 73.) — Der zweite Teil des Heftes bietet einen Aufsatz über „Die deutsche Bibelbildung des Mittelalters“, der viele bisher nicht gedruckte Bruchstücke bringt. Die vier beigegebenen Bildtafeln erhöhen den Wert des Buches für den Kenner. Wir stimmen dem Verleger durchaus bei, wenn er schreibt: „Auch dieser Band, für den Theologen, den Historiker und den Kulturschriftsteller von höchstem Wert, eröffnet neue, aufschlußreiche Einblicke in das große und reiche Kapitel: Bibel, deutsche Sprache und deutsche religiöse Volkskunde.“

B. E. K r e g m a n n

Professor J. Gresham Machen, His Life and Defense of the Bible. By W. Masselink. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 175 pages, 5¼ × 7¾. Price, \$1.00.

Prof. J. Gresham Machen is well known to the readers of the MONTHLY on account of his conservative doctrinal standpoint and his vigorous defense of the Bible, and some will be glad to know a little

more of his life and his life's work. He was indeed an outstanding man in the conflict with Modernism during the last fifteen years. The book consists of five parts: 1. The Life of Professor Machen. 2. The Modernistic Movements which Machen Opposed. 3. The Methods of Machen's Apologetics. 4. What Machen Defended in His Apologetics. 5. Appreciation and Criticism. Our readers know, of course, that Machen was an outspoken Reformed theologian. So is his biographer, a member of the Christian Reformed Church and pastor of a church of this denomination in Grand Rapids, Mich. But he has made quite a thorough study of Machen's life and work, tells us of his youth as the son of a prominent lawyer in Baltimore; of his studies at Johns Hopkins University, where Prof. B. L. Gildersleeve, the foremost Greek scholar of our country in his day, was his teacher and stimulated Machen's love for the Greek language; of his theological studies in Princeton Seminary, where Dr. Francis L. Patton, president of the seminary, William P. Armstrong, the head of the New Testament department, and Benjamin B. Warfield, the dogmatician, were his teachers; of his years spent in Germany, where he studied at Marburg and Goettingen and was brought into contact with the foremost Ritschlian and *religionsgeschichtliche* scholars of those days: Hermann, Juelicher, J. Weiss, Knopf, Bauer, Schuerer, Bousset, Heitmueller and Kattenbusch, some of whom he combated vigorously in his later works; of his teaching days at Princeton Seminary and Westminster Seminary; and of his outstanding books, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*; *What Is Faith? The Christian Faith and the Modern World*; *Christianity and Liberalism*; *The Christian View of Man*; and what seems to the present reviewer the foremost of his works, his brilliant apologetic *The Virgin Birth of Christ*. Machen was a born fighter, and even his commanding stature and his firm and determined speech and delivery impressed the casual observer. He believed in, and defended, the divine origin and inspiration of the Bible and the reconciliation of sinners through Christ's blood; but he also defended the erroneous Reformed doctrines, as every one knows and as is also stated very emphatically in this book. It was a distinct loss to the American Church, which nowadays is so largely tainted with Modernism, when Machen in the prime of his life died on January 1, 1937, in Bismarck, N. Dak., to which place he had gone in the interest of conservative theology. And no one reading this book can fail to be impressed by his personality, his achievements, his scholarship, and his apologetics. Whenever Machen came to St. Louis, he spoke and preached in the interest of his theology, of his Fundamentalist convictions, and of the institutions which he represented, either at the Xenia Seminary of the United Presbyterian Church, when this institution was still located in St. Louis, or at the Memorial Presbyterian Church, founded by the well-known preacher J. H. Brooks and upholding the conservative standpoint to the present day. He also visited our Concordia Seminary and on several occasions mentioned it favorably. I shall not forget his parting words on the occasion of his last visit, when we had discussed theological questions and church conditions. He stated: "We can never get together. You are a Lutheran, I am a Calvinist; our going together would be unionism; but we can, and ought to, defend, every one in his sphere, the divine

origin, inspiration, and authority of Holy Scripture and the redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, the divine Savior." After he had returned home, he sent me a copy of his book *The Christian Faith and the Modern World*.
L. FUEBRINGER

My Reasonable Service. By Deaconess Ingeborg Sponland. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. 158 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.00. May be ordered through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

This is the autobiography of Deaconess Ingeborg Sponland. She was born in Norway, where she also received her deaconess training and served in several hospitals for seven years, until her coming to America, in 1891. Here she had charge of the Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis for thirteen years, during which time she was instrumental in establishing six hospitals in North Dakota and Minnesota.

She became Mother Superior of the Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital in Chicago in 1906 and did active service for thirty years there. She retired in 1936 and now, at the request of many friends, has published her life's story.

It is evident that the long years of service in her chosen field has closely associated Sister Ingeborg with the history of deaconess work in our land. Her story is told in a simple straightforward manner and covers in three chapters her childhood and youth, her preparation and early service in her native land; in five chapters her work here in our country is related from her pioneering in the Northwest to her work in Chicago, and a world tour is also described. Our pastors will find the story of Sister Ingeborg refreshing. So will their wives and ladies' aid societies.

W. G. POLACK

The Work of the Lord. By Walton Harlowe Greever, D. D., LL. D. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, London, and Edinburgh, 1938. 142 pages, 5×7. Price, \$1.25.

In this book, well written, Dr. Greever, the well-known secretary of the United Lutheran Church in America, presents a wealth of thought in reference to the work of the Lord which the Christian is called to do in this world, individually and in cooperation with his fellow-Christians. What the author is aiming at he tells us in his Preface: "Why do the great causes which the Church presents in its program for the advancement of work of the Lord in the world suffer so tragically for proper support? That question challenged an adequate answer. In the search for that answer other questions were raised, and their answers led toward the roots of our deplorable delinquencies. It has become apparent that these great causes are scarcely in the minds of multitudes of the people in the Church at all and that many others who are induced to think of them do not regard them distinctly as the work of the Lord but as enterprises of a few men who call for support in the name of the Church." (P. 7.) The true and clear ring of such statements as the following has impressed us: "The Church requires purity in doctrine and consistency in life from those who present evidence of the divine call to the ministry of the Word." (P. 40.) "The call to worship God is a challenge to the *value* the individual places upon his personal re-

ligion. The appreciation which one shows for the privilege of worship reveals the place he gives to his religion in his life. If he prefers sleep for his body, the call of the flesh is put above the call of the soul. If he prefers visits with his friends, human social pleasures are put above divine spiritual communion, etc." (P. 52.) "Christian stewardship is exercised to the greatest satisfaction when it is sincere and honest. Very few are enjoying the practise of stewardship in the fullest degree. One is almost horrified at times by the inconsistency between profession and practise." (P. 72.) "It takes a strong character to accept proper adaptations without compromises. Individuals and established congregations should support the policy which places choice men in home mission-fields and should not seek to call them away except where justification is very clear." (P. 107.)

In the last chapter on Social Relationships hardly enough space is devoted to the subject. Dr. Greever, speaking of public movements says: "It is always safe for the Christian to ask: 'Is the cause involved in this movement included in the program of the Church?' If it is a cause which is essential to the glory of God and the welfare of man, it should be found in the program of the Church, or at least should be such that the approval of the Church can be assumed, as in certain purely community or civic movements. If not such a cause, it does not merit the interest or support of Christians; for notwithstanding what good or importance might be attributed to it, its support would involve diversion from causes of far greater good and importance in the program of the Church." (P. 135.) The Church does not as a Church concern itself with purely community or civic movements. These are not within its sphere of activity. But, indeed, the Christian as a citizen should concern himself about these things.

Speaking of the means of grace which God uses, Dr. Greever says: "The Word is the means by which God both reveals and communicates Himself. He cannot be separated from His Word. It is not merely a message recorded or sent or proclaimed, but, as such a message, it is the use of language as the medium in which He dwells and through which He gives Himself. God Himself, not language, is the Word, and the living Truth bears the saving, transforming grace for God's work in the human soul. Language is the form in which man receives and transmits the Word, which is the definite means of grace by which the essential work of the Lord is done." (P. 37.) According to these statements not the written Word, whether read or heard, is the means of grace but God Himself. That is not the conception which the psalmist had when he said, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105), nor that of Christ, who in His sacerdotal prayer said: "I have given them Thy Word. . . . Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on Me through *their word*," John 17:14-20. The very idea that God through certain means imparts His grace postulates a distinction between God and those means.

Upon the whole the reading of this book is stimulating. It may well serve as an examination of the Christianity of our day and at the same time as an encouragement to greater Christian virility in the life of the individual Christian and that of the Church. J. H. C. FRITZ

Jesus Appeared. By William Dallmann, D.D. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wis. 87 pages, 5×7¼. Price, 30 cts. Order from Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

"This is what the appearance of the risen Redeemer did for Paul. What has the resurrection done for you?" This concluding paragraph contains the theme of this well-written and stimulating booklet. Dr. Dallmann reviews the historical events of the eleven appearances of Christ to his disciples and shows from the subsequent events in the lives of the apostles how they went forth courageously in the faith of the resurrected Lord to evangelize the world. Pastor and people (for whom the booklet is particularly intended) will receive new courage and strength for the great work of the Church. The booklet merits wide distribution.

F. E. MAYER

Martin Luther in English Poetry. Selected and edited by W. G. Polack. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 80 pages. Price, 25 cts., postpaid; dozen, \$2.40, and postage.

In our utilitarian age a book that does not claim to offer assistance for the work and strife of every-day life is welcomed with a little sigh of relief by a reviewer. Evidently there still are people who take time to sit down now and then and offer heart and spirit something higher than the daily grind. May their tribe increase and induce publishers to issue more books like this! Oh, for English equivalents of Gerok's *Palmblaetter*, Theiss's *Gepfloeckt am Wege*, Herzberger's *Pilgerklaenge*, Hueschen's *Wo Gottes Bruennlein rauschen!*—This booklet has, of course, an additional appeal. Every Lutheran will naturally be interested in what the great poets have said about our Luther. From a great wealth of material Professor Polack has culled 60 selections covering outstanding episodes in the great Reformer's career. The booklet, bound in gray paper covers, with black title on maroon panel, is recommended particularly as a gift for birthdays or in the Christmas season.

THEO. HOYER

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